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TENT EVANGEL

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"INTERDENOMINATIONAL, BUT STRICTLY
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Mountain-Moving Faith.

Rev. F. B. Meyer, D. D.,

London, England.

MARK XI : 22-24.

"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."



YOU are all familiar with the incident to which this passage refers.

On the morning of this particular day the Saviour left Bethany and for some reason he did so breakfastless. Where was Martha? Where was Mary?

Where was Lazarus, that they permitted Him to leave their home without food? The reason probably is that He had stolen out very early indeed for prayer—or may, perhaps, have been engaged in prayer all night—so that nobody heard Him leave the house.

Be that as it may, as He proceeded on His way to Jerusalem He saw the fig tree; and being hungry, He sought fruit, the appearance of the tree justifying Him in ex-

pecting some, as the fruit comes before the leaves.

But He found none there; and then, in order that He might teach a great spiritual lesson, He cursed the tree. And that tree has been full of lessons to all the centuries since.

Next morning, as He passed the place again with His disciples, Peter's quick eye saw what had happened, and he called the Lord's attention to the tree. He, instead of deducing the obvious lesson of the curse of God upon spiritual barrenness or sterility, diverged from it and deduced another, which to me is wonderful in depth and strength.

What He really said was this: You see that tree; now, if you can reckon on God as I did, you may not only have the power that blighted that tree, but whenever mountains block you in you may move mountains.

Evidently, Jesus in His human life did not work miracles by His divine attributes of omnipotence. He put that aside and preferred to live a purely human life, using pure faith in God—the faith that we can have through the Holy Ghost that came at Pentecost.

"Have faith in God!" What did those words mean?

I shall never forget the occasion when in my church, Hudson Taylor, the head of the China Inland Mission, stood up and spoke from these words as a text. I did not know all the meaning that there was in them for the speaker, but I remember that he said the words were to be read as saying "Count on God," "Reckon on God's faithfulness"—not on your faith in God, but upon God's faithfulness to you.

Afterwards I heard something of his life story. When quite a young man he had heard God say to him, "I am going to evangelize inland China, and if you are willing to go there with Me, I will do the work through you." And he determined to obey the call, and so began to reckon on God's faithfulness, with results that are known to all the world.

Jesus in His earthly life divested Himself of His omnipotence, which He forbore to use that He might lead such a life as yours and mine might be, and that He might begin and lead the life of faith as you and I can. He is now glorified with the glory He had before the world was made, and has all power in Heaven and on earth delivered to Him. So that He has the human power of the Son and the divine power of God over all, blessed forever.

You will note that He says in effect that all our lives are limited by mountain ranges. These great mountains, how they tower up in our daily lives!

You, dear woman, are hemmed in by them in your home; you, man of business, see them in the affairs of this life; and you, Christian worker in the slums of New York, are sequestered and shut in by high mountains. These shut out the great world behind high ramparts, and confine, restrain and narrow the activities of your life.

What are these mountains?

Here is one man hemmed in by guilt. His sins seem to rise up before him into the very sky, and in overhanging crags and precipices almost threaten to crush him.

Another is clogged by the outcome or result of some early sin. He repented long ago, but yet to-day the results of that wrongdoing loom up high before him.

Another has great anxieties confronting him, like the mountains of Switzerland, that bar the way to the smiling, sunny plains of Umbria in Italy; only for him there seems no way either of crossing his Alps or of tunneling through them.

Others have to face the approach of some disease, either for themselves or some one dear to them—consumption, cancer or some such thing.

How many of you, if I could only know your hearts, I should find to be penned in and limited by mountains of one kind or another! They are there the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. They are present with you both summer and winter. Other things change or pass away but these mountains are continually in your sight.

Now Jesus says that it is possible for mountains like those to be moved. And wherever you are I bring you glad tidings of great joy—that mountain shall become a plain. One day you shall look for it and find it gone. And instead of its rugged, massive height you shall see the green pastures, the beautiful rolling land, the prairie, covered with beauty and fruitful harvests.

I want you to see how this can take place. I rejoice to speak of it because I have so often in my own life seen the mountains go.

How is this mountain-moving done?

First, there comes a blessed invitation into the soul that it is not the will of God that your life should be hemmed in by mountains. This is said in the Word of God and corroborated by the words of God; and the more you pray the more clearly you will see that the mountain is not an essential to your

experience—not meant to exist continually for you. You can base this conviction on the words of promise—the adamantine invincible words of God afford solid ground upon which the soul can stand with both feet and from which it can hurl forth to the mountains the words: “Thou *shalt* remove!”

Therefore, I come back to the Bible. I do not need to be told that the sea is salt; I know it: I have only to dip my finger into the brine and to taste it. Or, that sugar is sweet, for I have proved it. So I do not need to study books of evidence that the Bible is the word of God: There is a quality in it, a fire, a divinity. And just as the canon of Holy Scripture was made by the church of old times, so the hemmed in soul that reads it will detect quality and flavor and power that make it different from all other books that were ever written.

Such a soul can read, for example, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you;” “your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things,” and similar passages that furnish love for the heart and truth for the mind. Get the realization of these passages into your heart and the conviction will be wrought in your soul that God never meant your life to be always shadowed by high cliffs.

Second, you begin to pray, and you call to mind the promise of Christ—“All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them” (Mark xi:24, R. V.) Then you begin to pray. But mind the *quality* of your prayer. I want to put emphasis on that point.

There is a sort of prayer repeated in a kind of plaintive and despairing way. It has been prayed so often, and has never been answered, that those who offer it have little hope of any reply, and it is doubtful if they would pray at all were it not that praying is the only thing to be done. This kind of prayer has a note of hopelessness or despair in it.

There is another sort of prayer with a note of faith in it; in which the soul feels that—not in its own power—it can count on God to be faithful.

I have met many people who are always looking at their faith, and they say, “I’ve got so little faith.” They remind me of an old Scotch lady who had a wide reputation as a woman of faith. A minister called to see her and said he had come because he had heard her spoken of as a woman of great faith. Her reply was: “No, I am not

a woman of great faith. I am a woman of little faith in a great God." That is it. It is a happy day for the soul when it ceases relying on its faith and begins trusting in the faithfulness of God instead.

Sometimes the woman who "touched the hem of His garment" is thought of as having had little faith. The fact is that she had great faith. If she had but little faith she would have felt it necessary to take hold of His garment with both hands, or to touch His flesh or to stop Him as He walked. But her faith was so great that she felt sure the merest contact with His garment would be sufficient to heal her. Just so the lightest touch of the faith that counts on God—that forgets whether it is great faith or not because it reckons on God obtains the answer. The faith that does nothing itself, and so leaves God plenty of room to do it all, that is the faith we want.

People say "I have not faith enough." You do not want faith enough. It is God that is going to do the work and it is for you to sit still and see Him do it. A friend wrote me a letter the other day, which I was glad to get, chiefly on account of the way in which he concluded it. Many people sign themselves "Yours faithfully," "Yours sincerely," and so on, when they mean nothing of the kind and may perhaps be trying to take advantage of you even in the very letter itself. But my friend signed himself "Yours to count on." That is the sort of signature I like to get from my friend; and God has signed all His letters to us in the Bible "Yours to count on."

Oh, friends, never forget that the best faith is that which is not conscious of being faith at all, but reckons upon God's faithfulness. I like to go sometimes—as perhaps I shall to-morrow night—out upon the deck of a vessel at night time, and look up at the stars. And as I do so I say "Who has created all these?" And as I remember that through uncounted æons all those stars have been kept running in their appointed courses with such exactness that no variation of even the smallest fraction of a second has ever been discovered, I say to myself, "If God can be faithful in making such a timepiece He will surely be faithful in all that concerns me!"

I look at Abraham and see how he counted on God and how God never failed him; I see that no man ever trusted God and was put to confusion; and all these things make me say, "I will count on Thee. Thou hast never put any of those who trusted in Thee among mountains without being

abundantly able either to tunnel through them or to reduce them to the level of the plain."

You say, "I have got God's promise." Pray then, reckoning upon His faithfulness. The more you think of Him the more you will feel at rest; and the day you are able without effort to believe that the mountain will go, you have it from God. "Believe that you have received it"—(I think that is one of the most wonderful things in the whole Bible; indeed I constantly have to look at that text to see that I have not misquoted it). "Believe that you have received it!"

As yet the mountain is there. As yet the parcel has not come to you. As yet the squadrons of God's angels do not appear hastening to your help; but as you kneel in prayer you *receive*. You believe you have got it. The very thing you want is labelled for you, the direction is written on it. It may not be to-day, or to-morrow, or a month, or a year, but you *know* that thing has been absolutely consigned to you. It is in God's bonded warehouse waiting for you to take it.

I *have* received; I *have* the Holy Spirit; I *have* the salvation of my child; I *have* my drunken husband restored to me as he was when he took me to the altar; I *have* that great boon—you take it; you receive it, and an infinite peace settles down on the soul.

Lastly. One morning—it may be a week or a year, or ten years, or twenty years, as you get up and go to the window you rub your eyes. You hardly dared to expect it, after all, but the mountain is gone. You could never have moved it, but your faith has been receptive of the lever of God's power, and the mountain has gone into the sea. Oh, peace of God, in which so many mountains are buried! Oh, ocean of God, coming up in little wavelets at our feet! Oh, mighty God, able to deal with things beyond all our power to combat!

If you will take these words and let them ring in your souls until you die—"Believe that you have received them," in your experience the words of the Saviour shall be fulfilled.

What is great to you is nothing to God. What is impossible for you God can put right by a very trifling exercise of His power. You have been worrying greatly over certain matters, but God could deal as easily with all your affairs put together as you could with a little pebble. And God cares for you and your little life just as if there was nothing else in His almighty

keeping—as if you were the only person who existed—as if all the resources of His being were concentrated on your little life.

It is nothing for Him to set you free, and if He lets the mountain stay there, it is for some wise reason. One day He will explain to you and take you on His bosom, and when you ask Him why you passed through these experiences that now try you so sorely He will caress you and smooth the wrinkles from your brow and say, dear child, that mountain was there to try you!

Mountains make strong climbers, deep breathers and vigorous men. The enervated inhabitants of valleys miss the mountains. I have been told by New Englanders in Omaha that they have there missed the mountains among which they were brought up.

The mountain is needed just to do that work, and when we are strong enough to stand on our high places God will say, that discipline is needed no more, so let the mountain be removed; “for My love shall not depart nor shall the covenant of My peace be removed.”





The Lost Bible.

Rev. P. S. Benson.

2 KINGS xxii : 8.

"And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the Scribe, I have found the book of the law in the House of the Lord."

THERE are many things that we do not at all appreciate at their proper value, simply because we have always been accustomed to them. We never know what anything is worth till we have lost it. Saul did not appreciate Samuel till Samuel was dead, and then in his despair he cried to the witch of Endor, "Bring me up Samuel." Nobody knows what bread is worth till he finds himself famishing in a desert, or air till thrust in some "black hole of Calcutta," or light till cast out into the "outer darkness," or water till he lifts up his eyes in torment and vainly begs for a single drop to cool his parched tongue.

And the like is true of the book we call the Bible. We were born in a Bible land, and from earliest childhood our lives have been illumined by the radiance that streams from its open pages. We have so long been accustomed to it that we cannot conceive of the blackness of the pall that would enshroud us if this lamp were blown out.

Upon the most of Africa it has never shone, and therefore we call it "The Dark Continent." It is the absence of the "Book of books" that makes it dark. And the like is true of large tracts of Asia. And over much of Europe and South America and Central America and Mexico "dim eclipse disastrous twilight spreads." What ails them? Why are they overspread with gloom when the sun is so near the meridian? Why lag they behind when other peoples with prodigious strides are forging ahead?

The all sufficient answer is that they have either no Bible at all, or it is chained to the pillars of priestly cloisters or hidden away beneath the rubbish of almost heathenish superstition.

And per contra what is it that guides and glorifies the Anglo-Saxon race, and makes the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes fly the highest of any flags that float beneath the whole heavens? It is not the grit that goes with Anglo-Saxon blood, but the grace that goes with the Word of God. The strong nations are the Bible nations the wide world over. If ever a people had occasion to bless God for the Bible they are the people that dwell beneath the American flag.

And if ever the time should come when the Bible shall cease to be potential in the councils of the nation and in the school and in the home then our boasted free institutions will topple to their fall and Ichabod will be written all over their ruins. Suppress free speech if you please, abolish trial by jury, repudiate the Declaration of Independence, banish the newspapers, shut up the public schools, and tear down all the splendid monuments of our twentieth century civilization, and yet if out of the wreck you save the Bible, we will build them all over again even grander than before. But destroy the Bible and "chaos and old night" will be all that will be left. And yet some of our race, as if devil possessed, are working like beavers to rid the world of a book to which they are so deeply indebted, and which, strangely enough, they so cordially hate, and are gloating like demons over the prospect of success in their diabolical endeavors. And in these latter days, when rationalistic infidelity is riotous and rampant everywhere, and men who are accounted as foremost scholars, and who occupy conspicuous positions in our theological seminaries are dealing resounding blows at the very citadel of faith, there be many earnest, simple-hearted folk who are actually afraid that something dreadful is about to befall the dear old book to which they have clung so lovingly and so long. And this brings us face to face with the most momentous question that has ever occupied the thoughts of man—*Is there any real danger that the Bible will be lost?*

There would seem to be such a possibility, for once upon a time it actually happened. There was not so much of it then as now, but what there was of it was a thing most precious, for it was all that man had of a written revelation from God. That it

chanced to be lost need not surprise us, for there was only one copy in all the wide world. That would seem indeed to have been sufficiently safe-guarded, for it had been entrusted to the custody of a people raised up for this very purpose. "What advantage then hath the Jew? Much every way. Chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God!"

Enshrined in the temple on Mount Zion, the very Gibraltar of the chosen race, and surrounded by the very flower and chivalry of the nation's strength, one would have thought the sacred book secure. But the sin-sodden Manasseh introduced the debaucheries of idolatry into the very courts of the house of God, and God's book on every page flamed out at "the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not," and therefore the old King hid the book away in a corner, and then conveniently forgot the corner. It was buried deep beneath the rubbish of heathenism, and the years rolled by and even the Jews lost sight of the fact that there had been such a book. There was but one copy and that was lost, nor was it found again till long after Manasseh was dead and the pious Josiah was reigning in his stead. That such a catastrophe could occur again would seem to be a thing impossible, for instead of a single copy now there are millions upon millions, and every year adds millions more. In public libraries, private libraries, in hotels, on railroads, in steamboats, in mining camps, and the palaces of princes—everywhere one may find the Bible. No list of bridal presents is complete without a Bible, for whether it be prized and read or not it is not regarded as good form to keep house without it. More widely than any other book in the world, or that ever was in the world, it is distributed. Surely now there is no possibility of its perishing from the earth. And it will not. Let no faint-hearted Eli sit trembling in the gate in mortal fear lest some disaster shall befall the ark of God. And if the timorous saint suggest that the ancient Eli had cause to tremble, for the ark of God was carried away into captivity and ignominiously installed by the Philistines in the house of their god, Dagon. I would remind him that in the night following the installation Dagon fell down before the ark and broke his neck, and that the Philistines made haste to take the ark out of the temple of the idol, but wherever they bore it, like a scythed chariot, it mowed down everything before it, and they were glad enough to send it back to its resting

place in Israel. Let us be sure that the Lord of hosts will take care of his ark. The Book of God is as indestructible as the throne of God. Men have buried it, but, like the Christ to whom it witnesses, it will not stay buried. They have burned it, but Phoenixlike it rises again out of the ashes.

Heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of God's Word shall fail.

And yet while the Word itself shall survive all "the wrecks of time" and never shall be lost to the race of men, there is imminent danger of its being lost to the individual—of its being lost indeed to you.

In a very sad sense it has perhaps been lost to you already. You have lost the Bible that your mother gave, inscribed with your name traced by a hand that has long since mouldered into dust. Just how you lost it you may not be able to tell, but somewhere in the hurried march of life it has dropped out of sight. You bought another more costly, it may be, but not so precious as the one that was hallowed by *her* prayers and tears. But there is imminent danger of your losing the Bible that you now have and losing it in a still sadder way, by losing the grip of faith upon it. The binding may be left and the printed pages all intact, but the Bible as a Bible may for you have slipped away.

I had a precious boy long ago, now safely sheltered in the upper fold, who loved me dearly while I had him here, and who delighted in nothing more than to clamber up the stairs to my study and sit at my feet on the floor, and look at the "picture books" I gave him.

One day in my absence he mounted the chair at my desk, and seeing my Bible open, and an inkstand and a sponge very temptingly near at hand, he proceeded to make for me an illustrated Bible by passing the ink-saturated sponge over its pages. Blessed boy! he meant not to ruin my Bible but he did. He was only a "little tot," and so I kissed him and forgave him. But what shall be said of the "grave and venerable seignors," who year after year are delightedly engaged in this same blotting business? Men have ever been accustomed to execrate the memory of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, who, with his penknife, cut out the leaves of the book of God and threw them in the fire, and are we to be expected patiently to look on while the destructive critics, with their knives sharpened upon German whetstones, are cutting out page after page of the holy writ?

The book survived the impious rage of Jehoiakim, but alas, for Jehoiakim! The book will survive the attacks of its modern critics, but alas for the critics themselves and those who take counsel of them. For them the Bible is a lost book as truly as it was in the days of old Manasseh.

And then again even though faith in the Bible be not gone, it may be practically lost through sheer neglect. It has happened in the Sunday school, which, though presumably built upon the Bible, is often ill-provided with the book, and instead of it in many a class there is "nothing but leaves"—"Lesson Leaves."

And in the pulpit, though still retained upon the desk out of deference to ancient and time-honored usage, how frequently only the barest shred of it is brought into requisition by the preacher, and that shred which he takes for a text he simply uses as a point of departure—a point to which he never returns in the course of his sermon, but preaches out of his head instead of out of the book, spinning airy cobwebs instead of giving the famishing people the pure milk or the strong meat of the Word.

And out of our individual homes and hearts and lives it is in danger of being lost. We are so cumbered with the cares of life, so infatuated with the pleasures of life, so hot-footed in the pursuit of the almighty dollar that we have left little or no time for the perusal of the Bible. And what time we do have is apt to be monopolized by other books. Even as far back as Solomon's time it was said that "of making many books there is no end," but what would the wise man say if he were living now? Tons upon tons, tons upon tons, hundreds of thousands of tons of books are being dumped by the printing press over all the face of the earth, and under them the Bible is in danger of being buried out of sight. And the daily newspaper, especially the monster Sunday newspaper—that "abomination of desolation," standing where it ought not!—that clinging curse entailed by the civil war falls like a pall upon our Christian homes, and shuts out the light which would otherwise stream from the pages of God's book. And Christian people such as are not absorbed in the Sunday papers are sometimes so absorbed in religious work as scarcely to have leisure left to feed their own souls on the Word of God. And so the book is largely lost to them. And this is what ails the church to-day. The pulpit has lost its grip on the people because the preacher has lost his grip on the Bible. He has let go

the two-edged sword of the Spirit and is flourishing instead a baton all bedecked with ribbons. He is playing at preaching instead of fighting like a man who is dead in earnest.

And this is what is the matter with the pew. This is why there is so little love and faith and hope, and why such soft susceptibility to sin, and such readiness to be caught by every fad that the devil sets afloat, and to be carried about by every wind of doctrine, and to be overborne by every wave of trouble. They have none of the stable anchorage and solid stamina of those "whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditate upon it day and night."

In the bosom of many a man who has practically lost the Bible there is sometimes awakened a painful consciousness of the dropping out of his life of that which once gave to him the sweetest solace and the noblest inspiration, and he is disposed to cry with Job, "Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when His candle shone upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness!" And this leads up to the question as to how the lost Bible may be found once more.

You remember how you found it first. Long had you had it in your hands, but it was as unintelligible as a Delphic Oracle and as dark as Mammoth cave. It was to you a sealed book and you had no power to loose the seals. In your extremity you reached out your hands unto God, and prayed, "Lord, lift thou upon me the light of thy countenance!" Then something happened as the consequence of which you saw light—God's light.

Some of you may remember to have heard the story of a man that afterwards became eminent in public life, but who in very early childhood was counted little better than a fool. He was always to be found at the foot of his class, and was the butt of the boys, and was to the teacher what seemed to him "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him"—not by reason of his viciousness, but his invincible stupidity. He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. She did her best to stimulate his sluggish powers, if indeed his feeble mental faculties deserved the name of powers at all, but apparently in vain. On one occasion when the school in which he was a pupil was to give an entertainment the poor mother besought the principal to give her boy "a piece to speak," hoping

thus to make him feel that he was not an utter "derelict." The officer appealed to reluctantly consented, and the mother undertook the task of teaching him the piece, but, after hours of patient labor, not a line was the boy able to repeat. At the last, the mother, frantic with despair, dropped on her knees and cried, "Oh, God, have pity upon me, for my poor boy is a fool." The boy overheard her, and, in sympathy with her, felt as if his heart would break; and something did break, only it was not his heart, but something in his head, as he declared afterwards. All the blood in his body seemed to rush to his brain, and something gave way, and his mind was flooded as with sudden sunburst, and throwing his arms about his mother's neck he exclaimed, "Mother, I can say it now," and say it he did, every word of it without a break, and many other things he delightedly repeated that he had vainly tried to learn at school, and from that hour as with preternaturally quickened faculties he forged ahead until he became the foremost scholar in the school, and afterwards rose to be one of the most distinguished jurists in the land.

Something like unto that happened when "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness shone into your heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord you were changed into the same image from glory unto glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." That mirror was the Word of God, and as you rapturously gazed into it you declared you had never seen it in this wise before. You had found the Bible.

But maybe you have lost it since—lost it as Manasseh lost it—strange gods have come in with all their train of trumpery, and the Bible has been "hidden among the stuff." You have sought satisfaction by dallying with these strange delights, but there has always been a consciousness of an aching void which such things could never fill. You had had enough of religion to spoil the world, and you have enough of the world to spoil religion. And so there is no light but rather darkness visible, and you are miserably groping through the gloom towards your grave, and all because you have lost the only light that can illumine this world of sorrows and sin. Would you find your lost Bible? Look for it in the house of God. That is where they found it in the time of King Josiah. Linger lovingly in the King's courts with an ear-

nest longing in your heart "to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple," and you shall find it.

And slacken the speed at which you are racing after worldly goods. There is no scripture which says, "He that runs shall read," but "He that reads shall run." God's plan is not to read as we run, but to read first, and then, inspired by the reading, to run. Once on a time I discovered on awaking while aboard a sleeping car that whenever I undertook to read a line every word was strangely cut in two so that only half of it was legible. An awful apprehension of approaching blindness seized me. On arriving at my destination I hurried to an oculist, who mightily relieved me by assuring me that there was nothing in the world the matter with my eyes, but that I had been driving my brain at too hot a pace and needed to slow up if I would avert a breakdown.

Let us learn the meaning of taking time to be holy, and taking time for the patient and pious pondering of the Word of God.

Many a scripture is like a sleeping child, at which, if you only gaze long and steadily enough, it will open its eyes, and you will look down into the very depths of God's wells of truth.

Would you find your lost Bible? Clear away all the rubbish that has been allowed to cover it up. It was thus that Hilkiah found it in the time of King Josiah. And above all—*Do it*. If any man fails to do the duty that he knows, and that is clearly set before him in the Word of God, there shall presently settle a cloud upon the very Word itself and in that cloud it shall be caught away. But "if any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine," and as he goes forward in the doing the light shall shine more and more unto the perfect day and presently he shall be ready exultingly to say:

What glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age—
It gives, but borrows none.





The Godhead of Jesus.

Rev. D. D. McLaurin, D. D.

COLOSSIANS ii:9.

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

THERE are majesties of expression in nature that absolutely overwhelm us, and that we cannot understand. They overpower the emotions and force the mind to admit that it is unable to canvass their greatness. Such an expression is Niagara. Its vastness absolutely dwarfs one. It was Daniel Webster who said, when standing at the base of the American falls: "I feel myself to be no larger than an ant standing here. I cannot compress with my mind the majesty of this presentation." No one, so far as I know, in any part of our country, will deny to the eminent Webster great mental capacity. Men have felt the same on the Swiss Alps, those wonderful snow-clad ranges like mountain masses of frozen splendor. Thus men have felt on the immeasurable slopes of the Andes. And so we say there are majesties of expression in nature that the mind cannot comprehend, that force it to admit that it cannot comprehend them, and that prefer themselves for translation to the realm of the emotions.

As in nature, which is the realm of objects, so in thought, which is the realm of ideas, there are majesties that we cannot understand in the Bible where the mountainous thoughts of the world stand. We cannot scale them to their summit, however strong we may be in our power of climbing. We cannot sound them to their profoundest depths, we cannot measure the extent of

their reach, we cannot touch their outermost rim. And so as the mind of man travels through this wonderful Bible of ours, it comes at times upon such an expression, such a conception, and before it, stands dumb.

The text which I have announced for our consideration this evening seems to me to be of this character. It must have leaped from the mouth of inspiration itself. No man unaided would have dared to give it utterance. Mortal faculty of its own self could never have created the conception. Paul did not speak it of himself. It was spoken through him. It sounds like a voice from the skies. Using Paul as an herald, the skies made proclamation of a truth that otherwise could never have been communicated to man. The mountainous expression is this: "In Jesus of Nazareth, an historical character, the man confessedly of all men—in Jesus of Nazareth the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily."

SOME DEFINITIONS.

I want to be very simple, although the theme may indicate the reverse, and so I will begin by definition, and first with some preliminary definitions.

The word "fulness" means that which is filled, made perfect, made complete. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," that is to say, that all the earth contains is the Lord's. And the meaning of our text is that all the natural, the moral attributes or qualities of the eternal God are in the person under consideration. If any one attribute or quality were omitted, any one element of his being were left out, it would be impossible for inspiration to say that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

And the word "dwelleth" needs also a preliminary observation. It differs from the word used by John in John i:14, that marvelous verse, which says "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The word there means "to tabernacle among." You will find that written in the margin of the revised version. It means that Jesus made a temporary sojourn. The word here is not the same word, nor does it mean to tabernacle. It means to live as in a house abidingly. Paul was making a strong argument against certain heresy teachers in the early church, men who asserted that matter was in itself evil, and who could not brook the thought that the son of God should be forever linked with a human body, and therefore they taught a doctrine at variance

with the Bible concerning Him. To me there is nothing more delightful than the thought that the Son of God, the eternal now dwells in the bodily manifestation which He took with Him to glory. You will see Him, you will know Him, for He is the God now dwelling in the body.

Now, a little further by way of definition. "Fulness" means sufficiency, abundance, richness. In Christ, therefore, dwells all the sufficiency of the Godhead. Will you fathom that thought? What mortal mind can apprehend the sufficiency of the outgoings of the Eternal? Who understands the sufficiency of the sea? Who knows its multitudinous life? How vast and wonderful it is! Who knows the richness of the earth, the mother and nurse of all the seeds, the parent and cradle of all growths? Have you never been astonished at the wonderful richness of the earth? How, year after year, without failure, she yields through her bosom the wonderful growths that delight the world and that feed the world. Who knows the sufficiency of the orbs that make the day and that braid their glory into the robes of night? Who knows the overflowing of the clouds, the springs that never fail, the streams that never run dry, the rivers that flow on in their majestic current century after century, millennium after millennium, carrying forward without cessation or break their mighty tide? Yet these are only a few among the creatures of God, and the creatures that we can apprehend with our capacity. If this, then, be true of these creatures of God, what must we say of the Maker of them all? If confessedly man cannot comprehend the majesties of these presentations, if even Daniel Webster cannot grasp with his gigantic mind the majesty of Niagara, rolling on and on, tumbling with its massive power into the gorge below, need we apologize if we cannot comprehend some of the mountainous thoughts of the word of God, or comprehend the Being to whom even this tiny earth is but "as the small dust of the balance?" There is something very strange about men who will gladly own their inability to master things at hand, things that are sensuous, that they can feel and touch, and yet will not believe something supernatural, beyond their reach, simply because they cannot master it. Is that not strange?

Now, the word "Godhead" is a symbol. All words are in some sense symbolic. They present ideas. But some words have more inclusive in their symbolization than others, and this is one of them. The word

Godhead is symbolic of more than one idea, yea, of many ideas. I want this evening to speak to you in a brief way of three of them.

GOD AS A PERSON.

First of all, God is a person, and Godhead stands for that. I know I am venturing into a most difficult realm of thinking when I undertake to speak of personality, either human or divine, but we know that God is a person. I know that the doctrine of the personality of God has sometimes been very crudely put, but because it has been crudely put, and because its representations have sometimes been gross, are we therefore to deny the personality of God? Modern thought, unilluminated by the gospel of Christ, influenced by the current philosophy of evolution, seeks to eliminate personality from the universe, and therefore, from God. That sort of philosophy teaches us that there is nothing stable, that nothing is static, to use their term, that everything is in process. The universe is not a being, but process. The universe is not a being, but a becoming; man is not a being, but a becoming; God is not a Being, but a becoming. If everything is in process how can any one have personality? The boldest of these philosophers claim that the universe is in process, man is in process, and therefore God is in process and so they deny Him His personality. But I am very glad to report that there is a sane return from that extreme position of men who have mastered, as they think, evolution, but have not yet been mastered by the illuminating Spirit, to the doctrine of the personality of God.

I found while reading that strong book of Harnack's this splendid little sentence: Fire is kindled only by fire; personal life only by personal forces. I know not how it is with you, but I know that I am a person. Is not my Maker also a person? I will not undertake to define myself a person, but I know that I am an individual, a person distinct from you all and from every other thing in the universe. I am conscious of a sovereignty. I know that I am. God is a person, and He is a person who loves us, and whom we can love.

GOD A PURE ESSENCE.

Then, in the second place, God is pure being, pure essence. God is the origin and fountain of all that is. God is the source of every life. Every tiniest rill of it in the universe has flowed forth from the Eternal. I am not going to enter into this

argument as it might be elaborated, but I simply attempt to bring it before you that the colossal thought may find a proper place in your minds. God is the essence of things. There is nothing about Him that is evanescent, nothing, as in us, that is exposed to decay and change. He is life. He is vital. He is so vital that all his overflowings are vital, and quicken everything they touch. God is a tree without a withered leaf. God is a sky which from all Eternity has lost never a star. Godhead stands symbolic of that.

MERCY, PITY, LOVE, AMONG HIS ATTRIBUTES.

Then, in the third place, God has attributes, such as justice, mercy, pity, compassion, love. I am extremely reluctant, thus to analyze God into His attributes. I prefer to conduct my thinking along the line suggested by my noble college president, when he said: "All of God is in every attribute," and it is thus I think of Him, not as torn asunder into attributes as theology has separated Him. Yet, for sake of convenience, we speak of Him in this way. I believe that theology has done vast harm in more directions than one, and perhaps in no direction more than in setting God's attributes over against one another, as when it has set His justice over against His mercy and has required His mercy to placate His justice, and has taught that Jesus Christ died in order to appease the wrath of God and satisfy His justice, as if Jesus were not the expression of the mercy and love of God. I believe that His mercy is in His justice and His mercy and His justice are in His pity, and His justice and mercy and pity are in His love, in a word, that all of God is love.

Godhead stands symbolic of all that. Is not that wonderful? God is great in all His qualities and attributes. He is great in His love. But what is love? We sometimes quote the definition of God given in the Bible: "God is love," and we know that our little child can understand it in part; we also believe that the most intelligent angel, if there be degrees in their intelligence at all, cannot exhaust its meaning. God is love, but what is love? Will you define love? Will you tell me what love is? Can you give us an analysis of love? The term love is like the term God itself. It is spiritual, it is invisible, it is subtle, it is intricate, it is impossible for you to analyze it. Yet we are not going to hang our heads in shame because we are not able to analyze or define love. We cannot understand or

know everything, but we know love when we see it. We feel it, we recognize its manifestations in life, and the child can do that and the mature man can do nothing more. Who possibly can fathom the meaning of that wonderful sentence, the gospel in epitome: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God is so great that even in love, while He is love itself, we cannot begin to comprehend Him.

THE GREAT INDEFINABLE.

Do you know, friends, that anything is mysterious to us that we are unable to define, that we are unable to limit or measure? The ocean is no longer a mystery to us, because we have sent our great ships back and forth across it. First, five months was required for the voyage, then five weeks, now but five days. There is no mystery longer in the melancholy, heaving sea. But before men knew the outermost bounds of it, and measured its shores, the ocean was a mystery. So it is with the being of God. He is indefinable. It is impossible for us to sound His depths by any plummet we can find, or to measure the extent of His being by any measuring rod that mortal man has ever yet seen.

The word Godhead, then, is a symbol of that collectiveness of attributes of power, of faculty or whatever else you choose to call it, which inheres in God. To say that all this dwelleth bodily in a man is simply startling. It lifts that man above consideration or comparison with all other men. It stands Him aside, it makes Him the unique figure thus far in human history. If you can say of Him that "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," you are saying of Him what it is impossible to say of any other man known in human history, or lives at this hour two thousand years after Him.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS.

Let us look at Him. Here is a great crowd surrounding a house. This Teacher of Galilee is within. Men are coming bearing a poor paralytic on a cot. It is impossible for them to enter by the door. They climb a stone stairway on the outside, and remove the tiles from the roof and let their precious patient down before Him. This Galilean Teacher stops in the midst of His discourse, and says: "Son, thy sins are forgiven." I want you to see Him—your God—in the midst of men, God, who alone has

power to forgive sins. The fulness of God's power is there to forgive human sin!

Another day. The crowd is pressing close upon the Teacher. He has been summoned to yonder stricken home. A poor woman who had suffered many years at the hands of the physicians and was nothing better, said: "If I can reach up and touch but the border of His garment I shall be made whole," and she reaches through the crowd and timidly touches that garment, and immediately she was made whole. Let me draw the curtain aside and say to you, men and women, behold your God. As you see Him giving life and healing to earth's wounded and suffering, you behold God Himself in these beneficent acts of mercy.

Another picture. It is midnight. It is in the city of the great King. There is a knock at the outer door. A venerable father is ushered in. As soon as he takes his place on the divan over against the Teacher, he says: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." And brushing away the questions with which he came Jesus opened to him the profoundest truths concerning man's needs and nature that man had ever heard.

Another day. He is journeying up through the country, and at the noon hour He takes His seat on the curb of Jacob's ancient well. His disciples have gone to buy bread. A woman of the town comes to the well to draw water, and Jesus there terminates the old Jewish economy and gives the sublimest teaching concerning worship the world has ever heard. Put the two together and you have in this Galilean Teacher the fulness of wisdom. He is the only Teacher who has spoken so fundamentally upon the highest problems of worship and experience. In Him behold God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Another day. There is a lovely family in a beautiful town about two miles from Jerusalem. When at Jerusalem He made His home there. There were three in the family, a brother and two sisters. The Teacher was away beyond Jordan, but they knew His address and when the brother was sick they sent Him word, but He did not come immediately. He told His disciples associated with Him that His friend was sick over in Bethany, and by and by He went. But, ah, it is too late. The body is now in the grave four days. The sisters are smitten with grief, their eyes are red with tears, and this Galilean Teacher weeps

with them, and as He stands there weeping He says: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Listen, men and women, only God could speak in that way.

JESUS SPEAKS WITH POWER OF GOD.

And once more. Around Him are grief-stricken men. Their hearts are sore. They are full of trouble, the common lot of humanity. And this Teacher seated in their midst says to them: "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." Only God could speak like that.

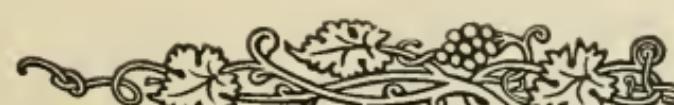
Have you lost your friend? Have you buried him away out of your sight? I want to draw the curtain away and say to you: "Behold your sympathetic God, for in Him who stands in the presence of your grief, Himself moved by a sympathy that makes Him tremble like a leaf, you see how God feels."

Are you looking out upon the future? You know that your years are few? Are you disturbed as to what comes next? I want you to listen to me. In seeing Jesus Christ you see God, and when He says to you: "Let not your heart be troubled, I will come back for you, I will take you to myself, that where I, the God dwelling in the body like your own, glorified now as you and yours will be glorified by and by, am, there you may be also," He speaks with the authority of the Father, God.

I was startled quite as much, when I first approached the study of this text, by the verse next, which I am not now really treating, as by this one, but in the light of this exposition we can appreciate it:

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and in Him are ye made full, who is the head of all principality and power."

Is that not a wonderful gospel? Let us thank God for it.





From Bethel to Bethel.

Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, D. D.

GENESIS XXXV:3.

"Let us arise and go up to Bethel."

IDOUBT not you have frequently seen the sky when throughout a long day it has been overcast with clouds, only now and then the sun would break forth but for a moment and then the curtain would be drawn together once more and only the clouds were to be seen. To me this is an illustration of the life of Jacob. The sun breaks through at Bethel, and while this seems to be a mixing of figures, for the hour of the vision was in the night, yet the glory of Heaven was upon him brighter than the shining of the sun. It pushes its way through at Peniel, once more appears in his pathetic love for Joseph, and later in his dignified appearance in the presence of Pharaoh, but, for the most part, his was a life with a clouded sky, and yet there are few stories more interesting. What Peter is to the New Testament Jacob is to the Old. The Bible would hardly be complete without the accounts of these two remarkable men. When we read of the Saviour of Peter we are comforted, for we find ourselves saying: "If Jesus can save such a man as Peter, transforming him from the fisherman to the preacher, from the profane man to the writer of epistles, there is hope for every one of us." We read about the God of Jacob and are inspired, for there are few of us to-day whose lives are so deceitful, whose characters are so questionable, as Jacob's, and yet he became Israel the Prince. Is anything too hard for the Lord?

From Bethel to Bethel is a good subject growing out of such a text. Thirty years of time stretch out between the two expe-

riences, and yet in these thirty years Jacob passes through much that is beyond ordinary interest, as for example his experiences with Laban, when he toiled fourteen years for his beloved Rachel, the prosperity which came to him both by fair means and foul, his struggling with the angel at Jabbok's Ford, and his tarrying at Shechem contrary to the command of God, for in it all he was never satisfied, for I hold it true that if one has once been to Bethel nothing else can satisfy, and if we have ever had a vision of Heaven the earth ever afterward seems dull and uninteresting.

After all this varied experience Jacob is at Bethel once again. It is not much in itself, just a long range of hills running north and south; the eastern slope descending to the Jordan and the western slope stretching away towards the more thickly populated part of the country. Through the valley before us illustrious travelers in all the history of the Holy Land have made their journey, and up the rough mountain road people have climbed with great delight. There is no house in sight and no animals are to be seen, excepting now and then an eagle or a wild mountain goat, but to Jacob it was a sacred place. There the first night of his flight from Esau he saw the ladder which linked earth to Heaven, the ladder which was thronged with angels performing their heavenly ministry, and he heard the voice of God. There are some words we cannot speak without arousing the tenderest emotions and the holiest memories. Mother is such an one. I well remember preaching to a crowd of rough miners in the mountains, holding their interest passably well until I spoke this matchless word, when all faces were softened and tears were seen in many eyes. Home is another such word. You doubtless remember the soldiers at Sebastopol, brave men who were ready to die, many of whom did die, bursting into tears as they heard the band of musicians playing "Home, Sweet Home," and Bethel was such a word to Jacob. It stirred the best that was in him and was the summons of God bidding his better nature arouse itself.

We have all of us had our Bethels. Some of us are separated from them by the dreary lapse of time, and between those happy days and our present unsatisfactory experience, days, weeks, months and even years stretch out, we say it to our shame. For some of us an active business life has separated us from Bethel, and yet this is positively unnecessary. "Not slothful in

business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," and if there is anything in your business that dampens your spiritual ardor, or blinds your vision of Christ, either your business is wrong or you are wrong yourself.

With some of us a foreign residence lies between us and Bethel. Back in the old country we were most faithful and devoted to Christ and constantly serving the church, but in this free land we have forgotten our vows, we have made the fatal mistake of leaving God out of our calculations, and somehow seem to forget the words of the psalmist, "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth and the sea thou art there." We might have been in fellowship with God all these days if we would.

With some of us it is worldliness that has dimmed our vision and robbed us of power, and that is the sad part of the story. Obligations once taken upon us have been overlaid and burdened with the lapse of years, and I would like if I might, to touch the harp of memory and bring back those happy days once more when our vision of Christ was unclouded, our appropriation of the Spirit of God complete and our joy inexpressible, so therefore I say, "Let us arise and go to Bethel." I would like to carry you back perhaps a quarter of a century when you left your home like Jacob and you said, "If God will I will." All these years He has been near to you, pouring out upon you His best blessings. I ask you, have you kept your vow?

Many Christians suffer from spiritual declension; they scarcely realize it, the stupor has come on so gradually, and it is only on a day like this, when they compare what they are with what they once were, that they realize their dangerous position. We do not come to be like Judas in a day, or even like Peter, but we leave our Lord by inches, some little sin creeps in at which we smile to-day but which defeats us tomorrow, and we are out of tune, we have lost our power, we are not what we want to be ourselves, and if our hearts condemn us God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things. We need, therefore, to go back to Bethel.

Where was your Bethel? Perhaps in some little church where on a certain occasion you forgot the minister and the one sitting by your side and had a vision of glory; or in some home where poverty abounded, but you were utterly unmindful of it. The house was filled with heaven,

and down to every pillow was sent the ladder, up and down which angels of God made their way. Or it may have been in some other land where you had a vision of God, and while we may not make the journey back to these places in the flesh, we can go back in thought and meet Him. Shall we not do so? As many as God loves He reminds constantly of neglected duties, sometimes using conscience, sometimes His providences; to-day in the loss of property He speaks, to-morrow in the departure of health, again in the death of a friend. It would be a good thing if we should stop and listen to His warning and then arise and go to Bethel.

Some Preliminary Steps.—Before we may ever expect to go back to the place of blessing it will be necessary for us to observe the instructions which Jacob gave to his household.

First: "Put away the strange gods," that is literally, "the god of the strangers." They have been living with the enemies of God's people, and little by little the gods of these people had gotten possession of them. They were taken into their tents and then into their hearts, and they were out of fellowship with God. Wherever there is a fungus growth in the forests there is corruption and decay, wherever there is an idol in the heart there is a fresh indication of weakness, and we cannot hide our idols, they refuse to be hidden. When we least expect it there is a resurrection.

What is an idol? It may be a very little thing. That which tends to usurp an undue place in our affections, which gives us more pleasure than the thought of God, is an idol. The thing is our life which makes us sacrifice nearness to God, which may not necessarily be sinful, only questionable, is an idol. That which makes us indifferent to spiritual advantages and indifferent to Bethel is an idol. Your reputation, your fortune, that unworthy friend upon whom you lavish your affection, these may be idols, for "no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or will cleave to the one and depart from the other."

Therefore put away the strange gods, and if we really want to be near to God how easy it will be to find out the thing that hinders us, and yet as a matter of fact, who can put away his idols? I cannot, I am sure, but there is a deliverance. Do you remember the story of David and Nathan, when David forgets that he is a king and a father and sins, and Nathan is the

messenger of God who comes to rebuke him with the touching story of the ewe lamb. When David acknowledges his sin Nathan immediately responds, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin," and there is in this expression a reference to the scapegoat of the Old Testament on the day of atonement, when the priest confesses the sins of the people and the goat was represented as staggering away under the load of Israel's sins, down through the valley, up the mountain yonder until he is lost to sight, and then finally, according to tradition, is pushed over into the abyss where no man is. He can put away our sins on whom the Lord hath laid our iniquity.

Second: Be Clean.—This refers to inner cleanliness which is only brought about by the indwelling of Christ. God puts away our sins, it is true, when He forgives us, but it is one thing to be set right concerning the guilt of sin and quite another thing to be set free from the pollution of sin. This second privilege is ours when Christ comes in to dwell with us. We are very much afraid of the word "holiness," in preaching and teaching, yet we have as much of holiness as we have of Christ, no more and no less. Let us be clean in the heart. This is possible by the Word of God which is cleansing in its very touch. Let us be clean in what we say, making a covenant with Christ to guard our lips. Asking Him to keep our eyes, let us not do the things that will grieve the Spirit, remembering that God can only use that which is clean.

Third: Let us Change our Garments.—This must refer to the outward practices of our life. In other words, our habits. What is the garment we are wearing to-day? With some of it is a robe of our own weaving, the robe of selfishness and pride, and mark you this, where self comes into a life Christ passes out. There is another robe which we may wear to-day, woven in the loom of Heaven, bearing the red mark of the blood of Christ.

Do you remember the story of the father and the prodigal, where the boy returned from his wanderings clad in rags, and the father said to his servant, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." I used to think it was a robe beautifully embroidered, but not so. One of our best Greek scholars has said it means, "Bring forth the same old robe he used to wear and put it on him, the robe he wore when he was as my son, living up to the privileges of his position, so that he may know that he is restored

again," and this is what we need to have put around us; the robe we wore at Bethel, when we walked in fellowship with God and had a vision of Christ.

In Ephesians Paul says, "Put off the old man, put on the new man," and then tells us to "keep putting away sin." This is the position of us here to-day. Oh, that we might change our garments! In the twenty-second of Matthew and the eleventh verse, when the King came into the wedding feast He rebuked the man without a wedding garment. He who had been rebuked was speechless. How can we stand before Him without the robe of His righteousness?

Never until Jacob came back to the place where he had slept with the pillow of stones underneath his head, to the very spot where he had seen God, did he receive blessing. And it is interesting to note in the sixth verse that when he came, his family came with him. As the head of the house goes the family will usually go.

Mr. Moody used to tell the story of the man, backslidden for thirteen years, who came into his meeting and got back the old feeling for Christ, and then determined to seek his family, but he found that in thirteen years they had wandered away from Christ and he came back to the great evangelist to say in an agony that every one of them had lapsed into infidelity.

I traveled the other day with a missionary from Wisconsin who told me how he had reached a drunken man in the woods of Wisconsin, told him the story of Christ and won him, and later had the joy of receiving the man and the six members of his household into the fellowship of the church. When Noah entered the ark, his family went with him. Let us arise and go up to Bethel.

Results.—First, in the fifth verse we read that the people were afraid of Jacob and his company, for the terror of the Lord was upon them. Matthew Henry has said that "when sin was in Jacob's house he was afraid of his neighbors, but when the idols were put away his neighbors were afraid of him." When shall we learn the lesson that we have power over men by the way of God. The world does not fear a worldly Christian, nor does the devil, and we need expect no triumph over men until we have first prevailed with God.

Second:—God appeared and talked with Jacob. This we read in verses nine and ten. Of course, no man can see God as He is and live. Moses asked this of God and He said: "I will put thee in the cleft of the

rock and cover thee with my hand while I pass by," and he saw the glory of the garments of God and His face did shine, but we can see Christ, and when we behold Him in His tenderness with little children and His ministering to the sick and suffering everywhere, we hear Him say, "He that hath seen me hath seen my Father also." God still speaks so to us; if we did but have our ears open we should find Him speaking in nature.

I can remember as a boy out in the country holding my ear up against the telegraph pole and listening to what was told me was the whirr of the messages flashing from city to city, and I used to wonder if it might be possible for someone to hear what might even then be passing through the air, and now to-day we have accomplished this in the wireless telegraphy, and if we did but have our ears open I am sure that with every rising sun, with every running stream, with every singing bird, with every thing in nature we should hear God speak.

And He speaks to us in the Bible, but the difficulty with us is that we have not faith. It has long been my desire to own one of the large old fashioned clocks used by our forefathers, and recently it became possible for me to gain possession of one. The works are perfect, the pendulum is perfect, and the whole clock is a thing of beauty, and I started it, but the pendulum would swing for a moment and then stop and I thought I had made a poor bargain in the purchase of my clock, but at last I discovered there was a little catch by means of which the pendulum was united to the works and I started the clock once more and it is keeping perfect time. Here is this old Book, truer than ever, if that were possible, certainly more precious than ever. We have called it uninteresting; we have let it alone when we might have been listening to its Heaven-born messages, none other than the voice of God, if we had but had faith. God said to Jacob, "I am God almighty," and that was enough for Him to say. "I will walk with thee." "If God be for us who can be against us?"

Third: In the thirty-fifth chapter of Genesis there are four burials. There is the burial of the idols, the burial of Deborah, the burial of Rachel and the burial of Isaac. It is a chapter of sorrow, but what a difference Bethel must have made in the way that sorrow was endured. I stood not long ago in the home of a man whose child was dead and I heard him say, although he had once been a Christian, that he all but

hated God, and I recall another experience where a woman with a breaking heart said, with tears flowing down her face that was shining, "The Lord gave and He hath taken away," and she was dwelling in Bethel. It is a beautiful thing to know that, over the body of Isaac, Esau and Jacob clasped hands and were united once more. If we did but live in Bethel old differences would be put away, trying experiences would be easily met.

Come let us arise and go to Bethel. We have all of us had Bethel experiences, so let us go back and pray as we used to pray, work as we used to work, and preach as we used to preach, and the heavens will be opened above us.





A Call to Personal Service.

Rev. Wilton Merle Smith, D.D.

LUKE x:2.

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest."

IHAVE here a little rhyme which was once sent out to his people by a ministerial friend of mine, which I will read to you:

What kind of a church would my church be
If every member was just like me?

These lines may suggest several questions to our minds. If all the members of my church were just like me, would the church, as a whole, please the Master? What kind of a prayer meeting would there be if every member always did exactly as I do? How about the Sunday School, if everybody followed my example? How much money would there be in the church treasury if all the rest gave just as I do? What would the unconverted people that come to church do and say, and what about the unsaved relatives and personal friends of the members, if the latter were all like me?

I remember reading a certain dream that Dr. A. J. Gordon, of Boston, now gone to his reward, once had.

He thought he was in his pulpit, when he saw a stranger enter the church with one of his deacons, beside whom he took a seat. There was nothing special about his dress to distinguish him from others in the congregation, but yet his face, and especially his eyes, continually drew the doctor's attention to him during the progress of the

sermon, every point in which was closely followed by the stranger. At the close of the service Dr. Gordon went up to the deacon and said, "Who was that stranger in your pew with you to-day?"

"That was Jesus Christ, of Nazareth."

Dr. Gordon said that the influence of that dream never departed out of his life, and that he never went into the pulpit after that without seeing Jesus of Nazareth sitting in the congregation.

"I begin to ask myself whether Jesus Christ liked that sermon that I preached—whether it was really preached for His glory or not. I wonder what He thought of the music and the paid quartette, and the high-faluting anthems they sang; of the way I read the Scriptures; and what was His opinion of the way I scolded the people about the small attendance at the Friday prayer meeting."

If Jesus Christ came to take charge of the church to which you and I belong would He be satisfied with the way in which we do our parts in the church work? No doubt He would find the building filled with very respectable people, but don't you think that He would want us to go out on Tenth and Eleventh avenues and Avenue A?

I do not believe that in any way the church of to-day shows the mind of Christ, as He looked out over the great unsaved multitude and longed for their salvation. See Him weeping over Jerusalem and saying: "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kill-eth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" As He utters these words, see the great scalding tears falling down His cheeks. I find nothing in my own heart or in the hearts of my church that corresponds to that great agony of desire that this city should be saved.

Then see Him sending out the twelve on their mission of mercy, and later, the seventy—the latter lay workers as distinguished from the twelve. It is worthy of note that the instructions given to the seventy were almost identical with those given to the apostles. They were to do the work of the ministry, haling men and women and saying that the Kingdom of God was nigh.

Is there any sense in which you and I are in any way near the mind of Christ in His anxious longing for the salvation of souls?

In the Sistine Chapel in Rome is a great painting by Michael Angelo of the Last Judgment, before which thousands have

stood in awe. Let me tell you that the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew is our Sistine Chapel, and we ought to be more impressed with the picture presented there than anybody could ever be who looks at the Italian painter's masterpiece in the Vatican.

The marvel is that when we are to stand before Christ the thing we are going to meet is not whether we have been pure in heart and life, or whether our business has been done honestly. The paramount question is involved in the verse: "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not," and the important thing will be whether you and I have given the bread and water of life to the multitudes in their starving condition of soul, without Christ and the hope of His salvation.

Let me paint from the Scripture the mind of the Church as contrasted with the mind of Christ. On one occasion He said to certain people: "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Why are you a Christian? If you have any interest in Christianity, is it because of anything you can put *into* it or because of something that you can get *out of* it? That is the question. Are you, spiritually, a "rice" Christian, as some mission converts in Asia are called?—that term being meant to imply that the person professes Christianity for the sake of some temporal advantage. Yes, many of you are. Is it not the purple and fine linen of religion that many of you seek? I do not say that the hope of reward in Christianity is altogether an unworthy one, for Jesus Himself held it up before us. But as compared with the all-consuming desire for souls that we ought to have, it is a comparatively ignoble motive.

If your religion is chiefly based on a desire to get to Heaven that is only another way of saying that you are seeking the loaves and fishes of the next world instead of this.

Multitudes of people are still ignorant of Christ, and I say, "What is there in your religion or mine that can so recommend it to them that they shall leave their darkness and superstition to embrace it?"

I remember once hearing Edward Everett Hale say in a Unitarian convention—and my cheeks flushed with shame as he said it: "The trouble with a good many orthodox people is that they are so much concerned

about saving their own little souls, many of which are so small as hardly to be worth saving, that they care very little about the souls of anybody else." But if we get near the mind of Christ and enter into the passion of His heart for the salvation of men, we shall hardly have time to think about ourselves at all.

In the fifteenth of Luke there is an appalling revelation of the heart of only too many professors of religion. In that chapter there are three parables and after each there comes a sort of refrain. If you look, you will see that after each of the first two there is a statement of the importance attached in Heaven to the salvation of souls. The seventh verse says "joy shall be in Heaven" and the tenth verse speaks of the joy of the angels, when a sinner turns to God. When I looked for a corresponding refrain after the story of the Prodigal Son, I could not find one at all at first, but at length I discovered it—in these verses: "And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

What a difference in the pictures! In Heaven appreciation of what it means for a soul to be lost, and joy over its being saved; but on earth utter failure to care whether men are saved or lost.

If we had the mind of Christ on this matter we should be able to see the great field that lies before each one of us. If we had one-tenth of the Master's longing for the salvation of the people our buildings would soon be filled with the seeking souls who are now absent from all churches.

If there is one thing more than another for which we should pray it is for a great, overwhelming, baptism of the mind of Christ, so that we can see, as He saw, what the "lostness" of a soul really means. If we could only realize the depth of those words: He "took upon Him the form of a servant and * * * humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," we should substitute real genuine service for much of the unreality of our present lives.

The trouble with the church—with you and me as Christians—is that we have not

one-tenth the willingness to suffer and to do the hard things that He had. It is because of our supineness and unwillingness to suffer sacrifice that the work Jesus wants us to do is never done. Our feeling in such matters was accurately expressed by Peter in his words to Christ when the latter was speaking of the things he should suffer in Jerusalem: "Be it far from Thee, Lord!" or as the margin has it, "Spare Thyself, Lord."

When during an earthly war some desperate undertaking has to be carried through, in which not one-third of those who take part in it are expected to survive, thousands of men will volunteer for it without a moment's hesitation as soon as the call for volunteers is issued, although they know that their action is almost certain to involve tears and agony and blood and death.

Do you remember that awful verse in Malachi: "If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?" The Israelites were told to bring to God for sacrifice the very best they had, and we ought to do the same. Yet some of us seem to think that anything is good enough for God, and we bring Him the lame or blind lamb instead of that which has no blemish. We give Him the little when we might give Him the great. We take up a cross that is so small that we can hardly feel it, when we ought to carry one that should make our knees stagger beneath its size and weight.

Years ago I went to a jeweler's store because I wanted to buy a beautiful stone. He showed me a very fine specimen, and then he fetched out from a drawer another stone, and much larger, although very similar to the first. He said that I could have the second for the same price as the first, because it had a small flaw in it; though he added that this flaw was so small that a microscope would be needed in order to detect it.

Of course, I instantly rejected the thought of giving to the person so dear to me a jewel that had any imperfection at all, and purchased the perfect one. How often the stone we give to God is the one with the flaw in it! We do not find the most brilliant jewel we can buy and lay that on His table; but we bring Him some half-hearted compromise with flaws in it instead.

I had a friend who went gunning in the mountains of Tennessee; and as he had no dog, a little bare-legged boy belonging to one of the mountaineer families went with him to pick up the birds. Every time the

gun went off away the little fellow would go into the bushes after the bird, his legs soon becoming all torn and bleeding from the thorns and brambles through which he passed. My friend asked him what he was going to do to them. "Nothin'."

"But don't they hurt?"

"You bet they do."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"Jest let it hurt."

And as the gun went off again, away went the boy to fetch the bird last brought down.

That is the kind of philosophy we want in the service of God; and only when the churches come to that "jest-let-it-hurt" spirit will their best be laid upon the altar of God.

I want to lay on you the burden and responsibility of personal work for souls. The Seventy were sent into people's houses to hale men and women and tell them that the Kingdom of God was nigh unto them—to do hand-to-hand, heart-to-heart and face-to-face work.

In London there is a place called Toynbee Hall, to which students and others go to try to help and benefit the people who live in its vicinity. The leading thought there is that it is of little use to try to lift up humanity in the mass, but that it is well worth while to take one man or one family in hand and continue steady, patient effort to make that man or that family a center of light and happiness. The trouble with us is that we have been, and are still, trying to lift up people in masses instead of as individuals. If we could only get any good proportion of the members of this congregation to see the value of personal work for Christ and to engage in it, there is no knowing what the results might be, or where those results might stop.

When I was pastor in Cleveland I tried to do a little work in that way myself. About a block and a half from my church lived a foreman employed on one of the large papers. He and his family were avowedly skeptical. One day I called and invited the folks to come to church. I had a chilly reception. Next week I called again. This time the skepticism of the father was plainly announced and doubt expressed as to his acceptance of the invitation. The third time there was a little thawing out. The fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth visits followed, and on the Sunday evening following my ninth call I had the satisfaction of seeing the man and his wife coming and take a back seat in the church. Before the

year was up I had the joy of receiving that man and his wife, and the only child big enough to take the step, as members into the church.

Did it pay? Soon after that episode I was called to New York, and five years passed before I returned to Cleveland, and stood again in the old church. There was a great congregation before me, and when I went into the pulpit I looked up into the galleries for these friends of mine, but could not see them. I looked about in different parts of the church, but could not discover them. I began to wonder whether they had drifted off to some other city or not, when, after looking in about every other part of the church, I saw them sitting in the very front seat.

At the close of the service, the first hands I shook were theirs, and when I asked if they had been faithful during my absence, the father said he did not think they had missed a service since I went away, and that now all the children were members of the church.

Anything you can do for souls by sympathy and hard work pays. Yes, it does. And that is the only thing that does count to any practical extent in the church. You may go regularly to the prayer meeting and do a little good to those who go there. You may be faithful and upright in business and set a good example to the few who are under you in that. But when you become real greedy for souls, and work for them continually, then your influence and power for good are felt not only all through your church but far beyond it.

Once in Cleveland I was called to conduct the funeral of a lady who died at the age of ninety-four. Gathered together there were forty-six of her descendants, every one of whom was an earnest Christian—some of them being among the foremost workers of my church. One of them said to me, "We owe it to her that we are Christians to-day—to her earnest prayers, faithful words and consistent life." I wondered, as I heard that, whose hand it was that—many, many years before!—had pointed a young girl to Jesus with such excellent results, extending over nearly a century, and larger and more far-reaching than ever before.

Do you suppose that Peter Bohler realized what he was accomplishing through his personal dealing with John Wesley, that young Church of England clergyman? He really founded Methodism—that magnificent church that has never been false to her Lord.

And in the conversation between Stanpitz and Martin Luther lay the whole of that mighty Reformation accomplished by "the solitary monk that shook the world."

Nobody can possibly know all that it means to try to lead a soul to Christ, and if we are willing to work for Him He will surely bless our efforts.

I am not fond of talking about my personal experience, but some of it may be helpful.

During my junior year at Princeton College, a day was appointed to pray for colleges and universities, and a special consecration meeting was convened for enrolling those who would undertake to speak to at least one of the men in college about his soul. I was a Christian then, but only a poor, miserable, nominal specimen, and when this consecration meeting was fixed I took good care not to attend it.

Next day there was a wonderful service. Dr. Taylor, then pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle, preached from the text "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." He preached so that the fire entered into my soul, and made me the most miserable man in the college. The sermon was followed by a meeting, in which about twenty men belonging to my own class talked.

After the meeting one of my friends asked me why I had not been at the consecration meeting the day before. I said I had had to study. That was a lie. My friend said, "I don't believe it. The fact is you haven't got any grit or any courage in your religion, and I don't believe you've got very much at all even of that." He went on talking to me for an hour or so along that line till I felt about as small as my little finger; and I never felt meaner in my life than I did as I went up the steps to my room on the third story.

As I reached the second story I saw the light shining in the room of a classmate. He was the son of the mayor of an important city, and was a skeptic as to religion.

I knocked at his door, earnestly hoping that he was out. But he was not out, and when I got inside the room I closed the door behind me and stood with my back to it. I don't know which of us looked the most astonished. Then I blurted out, "Eddie, I don't see why you are not a Christian!" He looked at me with a look of surprise and said: "Do you know I'm very glad you came in? I've been thinking about that very thing all this day."

I did my best to lead him to Christ, and

the next day sent somebody to talk to him who had had more experience than I.

Three days later he confessed Christ before the world.

Two years ago I shook hands with him in a distant city where he is an officer in a Presbyterian church.

There was a reunion not long ago of my old class of twenty-five years ago. There were fifty-five of us present. Among those I met was the former captain of the baseball nine. I was the pitcher, when we were both at college. He was then somewhat profane and drank a little, too. I felt I could speak to almost any man at Princeton about religion except Dave.

One night Dave said to me "Why have you never asked me to be a Christian?" He cried and I cried and to-day he is preaching the Gospel.

Are you willing to try to do some of this personal work for the glory of God and the building up of His church? There is nothing that the church needs so much, and I would like to know whether you are going to take everything that God gives you, but not give Him in return anything that really costs you.

It is over blood and tears and sacrifice that you walk to glory. Will you not give some service and make some sacrifice that others may meet you there?

If so, begin at once to do some personal work for Jesus. God grant that the mind of the Master—longing for the salvation of the city—may be yours, and that the sacrifice of Christ, which caused Him to give His blood for men, may at least, in some slight degree, be *your* sacrifice. Amen!





The Work of Soul Winning.

Rev. John Balcom Shaw, D.D.

PROVERBS x:30.

"He that winneth souls is wise."

THE Revised Version renders it : "He that is wise winneth souls." Either of those statements is true, whichever rendering you take.

The man that is wise will win souls if he be truly wise, and only he that is wise can win souls. In other words, there is a secret to this work, and, like all of God's secrets, it is known only to them that fear Him. May the Holy Spirit guide us this afternoon as we seek to know the secret of soul winning.

First and last there can be, of course, only one secret of soul winning, and that is the Holy Spirit's co-operation with us. Without His aid our mightiest effort will be impotent, and with His help our weakest effort will be omnipotent; and, speaking again fundamentally, there is only one thing that conditions the Holy Spirit's co-operation with us, and that is our co-operation with Him. As dear old Dr. Spencer, of Brooklyn, himself one of the greatest winners of souls in his time, used to say when he was speaking to pastors who were seeking an awakening work of grace in their churches: "Be sure that you co-operate with the Holy Spirit." So that our inquiry as to what is the secret of soul winning resolves itself into this one basic inquiry: Wherein does our co-operation with the Holy Spirit consist? And I think I will answer that question under three heads.

First, we co-operate with the Holy Spirit when we yield ourselves to His influence and become the personal subjects of His gracious operation. Otherwise, what are we

doing? We are resisting the Holy Spirit, and what is resistance but the very opposite of co-operation?

Secondly, we co-operate with the Holy Spirit when we share His purpose, and share it so truly and so deeply that it stirs our being to its depths, and fires us as with an all-controlling and consuming passion. If that be not the case, then in our purpose our face is in one direction and the Holy Spirit in His great impelling purpose has His face in the opposite direction. We are at variance, and there can be no co-operation between us.

Thirdly, we co-operate with the Holy Spirit when we join Him actively in His work, for a co-operation that is only negative is no co-operation at all. I believe we shall discover the secret of the Lord in this matter along those three paths.

Friends, I believe it with my soul, and I believe it so that I am willing to act it out, that we must go to the people. If they will not come to the church, we must carry the church to them. Let us have our tents; let us hire our theatres; let us go to the race grounds and to the fair grounds, anything that is legitimate, in order to bring the life-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to dying men around us.

First of all, we co-operate with the Holy Spirit when we yield ourselves to His influence and become the personal subjects of His gracious operation. How true it is that we go out to ask men to come to Christ, when we have really not truly accepted Christ ourselves. How true it is that many a man who has attempted to be a winner of souls has urged men to have absolute faith in Christ, and his whole life has been one unbroken piece of unbelief. And how true is it that we have enjoined men to make full surrender, and we have not known what surrender is ourselves. Now can there be anything more devitalizing spiritually than that? It will not only sap a man of his power, but sap a man of his sense of power to be conscious of inconsistency. Why, it is like leakage to a vessel; it is like escaping steam to an engine; it is like a defective wire to an electric current; and if this sense of inconsistency affects us in this way, how much more does it affect the men around us that we are trying to bring to Christ. I think that inconsistency is the highest stumbling block that many people around us have to fall over before they get into the kingdom of God. You let a man be able to pick you out and say, "Physician, heal thyself," and not only will he be sure to say

it, but the fact which enables him to say it will render him utterly unsusceptible to your influence and to your work.

And if it affects others and affects ourselves, then how must it affect God? A man who has never himself put away sin, God can never use to call other men out of sin. A man who has not himself absolutely surrendered to Christ can never become the apostle of surrender to other people; and he who is living in union with the world, rather than in separation from the world, is obstructing and not conducting the flow of Christ's grace into his life, and out from his life into other lives.

Therefore, dear friends, I believe that before any of us can become effective and fruitful soul winners, we must yield to the threefold conviction of the Holy Spirit; so far yield to His conviction of sin that we have put sin absolutely and forever out of our hearts and lives; so far yield to His conviction of righteousness that God's will is our will, and we rest in it, and we surrender to it; and so far yield to His conviction of judgment to come that here and now we are drawing the line of separation which divides the followers of Christ from the adherents of Satan. In other words, we cannot be winners of souls unless we are clean men and women, unless we are surrendered men and women, unless we are separate men and women. Aye, it costs to win men to Christ. It costs sometimes the thing which, humanely speaking, is the dearest to us, and the reason why we fail in the effort is because we are unwilling to pay the cost.

A friend of mine has only recently returned from a tour around the world, and he has a great deal to say about the conversion of a cannibal chief down in the South Sea Islands, whom he met and admired when he was visiting that part of the world. The old chief was truly converted, and, like a man truly converted, he immediately became a missionary, and he took his dugout canoe and rowed in and out among those islands to preach Christ to his fellow cannibals. But after a while he thought he ought to have a better boat than the dugout canoe, and he came to the American missionary and said he wished that he could have a boat like his, and the American missionary said: "Why, I will sell you mine; I haven't much use for it." He sold him his American boat, and the chief sailed in and out among the natives, and the natives looked at him and thought it was a fine thing to be converted to this religion,

that there were certain earthly advantages attaching to it; and he began to realize it, and it began to affect him spiritually and bring the flesh back into control, and he came back after the course of a few weeks to the missionary and said: "I have brought back the boat." The missionary said: "Why, what is the trouble? Do you want your money back?" "Not a cent of it; it isn't for that reason I bring it back." "Is it because she isn't seaworthy" "Not for a moment; she is a splendid boat; I wish I could keep her, but I can't keep her." "Well, what is the trouble?" "Ah," he said, "I want to tell you that when I sit in that boat and sail in and out among my fellow cannibals, I see them looking at me, and it brings back the old cannibal feeling. I shall go back to the cannibal life in less than a year if I keep my boat; I must give up my boat." Dear friends, there are some of us that will have to give up our boat. I don't know what yours is; I think I know what mine is. I trust that any one of us who desires to be a winner of souls will not make the mistake of keeping his boat and expecting to be successful in bringing men to Jesus Christ. You will have to search your hearts for yourselves.

I well remember when it seemed to me that the Master almost visibly started up the steps of the throne of my heart and life. I can see Him as if He were photographed before me, and I can see Him this morning, with His right foot on the first step up to the throne, looking up into my face and saying, "Shall I come farther? Here is where you have kept me all the rest of your life. May I come to my rightful place?" And I said: "Lord Jesus, ascend the throne and take the sceptre," and new life came to me, and I verily believe a new anointing. Dear friend, can you get any such vision of Christ beneath the influence of the meeting this morning as that? Is Christ in control over your life? Have you allowed Him to come into only a part of it, and He is still waiting to have absolute control? Let Him come to the throne this morning. Give up your boat, whatever it costs you, and let Christ have His rightful place. You will never be a winner of souls, believe me, until you give up your boat, whatever that boat may be.

Now may we turn to the second part which I outlined, namely, in order to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in such a way as to insure your success in the winning of souls, you must share His purpose; share it truly and share it fully, so that it becomes

a consuming purpose, a passion, in other words. Now that is the great purpose of the Holy Spirit. We are all agreed upon that. He has but one great purpose in the world, and that is to bring the world to the foot of the Cross. Wherever He works and in whatsoever way He works, that is His passion, and we must have it before we shall share His purpose. How far have we that purpose so that we can call it our passion?

You say, "Why, I have that purpose, and that purpose is in command in my life. I give to these things; I am interested in them; I pray for them; I seek the advancement of the church and the advancement of Christ's kingdom." You may do all that, and yet not be in the purpose of the Holy Spirit. That is theoretical; what about the practical thing? I confess that as I go up and down throughout our country—and I have done a good deal of it this last year in an effort to awaken some of the churches of our own denomination to the duty of this thing—I am more and more impressed with the absence of a passion for souls. I do not find it among church people as I believe I ought to find it. I surely do not discover it among many of our church officers, and even among our church women, as I think it should be; and I frequently find much of it absent from the preaching of the day, the old love of souls that used to take hold of the church and stir it until it would break out in those wonderful revivals back in the years that some of us remember, and remember well, and we have been longing for a return of those days ever since.

I do not know why it is absent. Some tell me it is because of Universalism that has grown up in the church, in which increasingly so many people do not believe they need to be brought to Christ in order to be saved; and, do you know, I half believe it. Sometimes I am told that it is the commercialism of the age, in which even church people are elevating the seen and deteriorating the unseen, after the gold that itself is eluding them, as well as better treasures that they ought to be after. Sometimes I am told that it is the secularism of the day, the worldliness of the church, so that there isn't any longer in a great many churches any line that separates the world from the church; it is all rubbed out; worldliness honeycombing our churches in the country as well as the city; and I sometimes think that is true. And then I have been told—and I half believe that—that it is the selfish-

ism, the religious selfishism of the day; and there is a great deal in that.

I have often felt that we were altogether too willing to sing our way into the better and sweeter and higher things in Christ, to the forgetfulness of the world around us, and that we were contented if we could get the good felling in our hearts, and we forgot all about the men and women that were dying all around us. But whatever be the cause, I know that until the church gets its passion for souls, there will be no widespread awakening and there will be no fruitful ingathering of souls to Jesus Christ.

It is the difficulty of the church to-day. We have advanced along missionary lines splendidly; along sociological lines, with our church houses and their equipments, with our various organizations. We have advanced along humanitarian and benevolent lines, but we have not advanced these years one step along this line, and that is where I put my finger upon many hearts that perhaps are just before me this morning.

When I see old Christmas Evans, on his way to the meeting, the schoolhouse where he was to preach that night, and preach a sermon for souls, tying his horse to a sapling by the way, and literally throwing his face upon the ground and staying there until sunset; when I see Charles G. Finney out in the haymow all night praying, asking his host to let him sleep in the barn, rather than sleep in a comfortable bed in the house, and he on his knees all night praying for power with souls the next night; when I see our own dear Dwight L. Moody in those great hippodrome meetings in New York city, anxious to get through the service in the big auditorium, where he was dealing with the multitude, in order that he might get into the inquiry room and deal with the individual; and when I read in the life of George Macgregor, recently published by his cousin, this remarkable statement in that chapter entitled, "A Passion for Souls," that there was probably not an hour of the day in all the last years of his life when a passion for souls did not present itself consciously and consumingly to his heart, I know, dear friends, what is the matter with me, and I think I know what is the matter with a good many of you. It is a lack of a passion for souls. When we see the world dying, as Christ saw it, when He looked out from the Calvary, and when we feel for that world as Christ felt for it when He set His feet to go to Jerusalem,

and stopped not until He had gone to the end of His life and given it up for the ransoming of dying men and women, when, in other words, we have something of His passion for the world's salvation, then we will become winners of souls, and not until then. May God breathe that passion into our hearts to-day. Away with our religious selfishness, away with the honeycombing of universalism in the church, away with worldliness in your life and mine, away with the commercialism that is shackling your hands and feet alike, and the inbreathing and inflowing of that love of Christ for the world which will send us out to be successful winners of souls.

Now just a moment along the third path, which is this: that if we would co-operate with the Holy Spirit, we must join Him in His work. Of course, there are various ways in which we may thus join the Holy Spirit in His work. The various lines will suggest themselves to you. I put increasing accent every day of my life, upon the life of the people of God before and among those that they are trying to bring to Christ. We do not, as a rule, put a strong enough accent there, dear friends:

"Thou must thyself be true,
If thou the truth wouldest teach.
Thy soul must overflow,
If thou another soul wouldest reach.
It takes the overflow of heart,
To give the lips full speech."

You let a man sincerely live the life of Christ before others, and it is a tremendous drawing power Calvaryward. Oh, that we might realize it. I know it is a truism; I know you call it a commonplace; the trouble is, it has come to be a commonplace in our thought, and in our experience; that is the trouble. Our lives count for more than we dream of every day. You cannot win a boy in your home before whom you are not living the true Christian life. You cannot win a scholar in your Sunday-school class if you are living a life that does not honor Christ, while you are trying to win such a scholar. It is impossible. May it be impressed upon us anew to-day.

And then what shall we do as a means of co-operating with the Holy Spirit, joining Him in His work? You know the old adage ran: "To labor is to pray." I turn that around and say, "To pray is to labor." I said to my people last fall, when we started out on a campaign for souls, if I could have ten men who would give themselves altogether to

active service, or ten men who would give themselves altogether to prayer, I would choose the latter. Do you know why? Because when I go out to work myself actively, God simply uses my arm; my hand is withered, and He restores it, and then uses that human hand. But when I go out to pray for souls and for the work for souls—I speak not irreverently—I use God's arm and God's hand. What shall I say of preaching the Gospel? Oh, I wish that I had an hour to speak on that theme. I believe that as a rule, speaking to my fellow ministers, that we haven't preached for souls as we ought to have done. I know some of our people will say to us, "I do not like these evangelistic sermons." Let them say on along that line; let us keep on with our evangelistic sermons. We must preach for souls; we must preach the Gospel of redemption to the sinner; we must do it faithfully; we must do it as effectively as we have the power to do.

And I fear that not only are we not preaching this kind of a Gospel as we should, many of us, but that we are not getting the men to preach it to, and we still stick to our old methods. What we want is the giving up of a great deal of what I call conservatism of method, ceasing for a while and being willing for a while to give up our dignity. I know some of the other churches represented here have not been so dignified, thank God, as the Presbyterian Church, which I represent. We are traditionally very dignified and conservative and conventional, but we are fast becoming otherwise, thank God again. I believe we must be willing to give up much of this dignity in order to get hold of men.

I was up in Albany speaking last fall, and as I climbed the hill up toward the Capitol to the hotel where I was going to stay, there was a little boy crying the evening papers with all the voice he had, and I looked around, and there wasn't another soul to hear the cry but myself, and I didn't want an Albany evening paper. Do you know, that is just about the way many ministers are preaching. It is not their fault, so far as their preaching is concerned, but they are calling for sinners to come to Christ, and the sinners are beyond the reach of their voice. A man in New England told me when I was speaking along these lines:

"I want to emphasize and endorse what you said about this. I live in one of the chief cities in Massachusetts, right across the way from one of the great churches of the city, having the best preacher in the

city, having the best music in the city, having the handsomest church in the city, having the most fashionable church in the city; but I sit on my veranda and watch that church on a Sunday night, and when the windows begin to be open I see people pass down the street and stand under the open windows and listen to the singing and try to get the voice of the preacher, and pass on. They never go in; and all that music is being sung, and all that preaching is being given to a little handful of people, and the crowd is surging by."

But there is one line that I want to suggest much more emphatically than any other. Dear friends, with all our living and with all our praying, and with all our preaching, I believe there is something else. I believe that something else is needed in order to render any one of those effective, and that is the personal touch, what we choose to call in these days personal work, and in which we are altogether—and I fear all of us altogether—too neglectful, personal work that reaches a man where something else has failed fully to reach him. I believe that there are people in our churches, as ministers, to whom we are preaching every Sunday that are unsaved men, and will stay unsaved so long as we depend upon our preaching. We may be afraid to go and speak to them. That man is the president of our Board of Trustees, that woman is one of the social leaders of our church; nominally they are Christians, but they have never taken a stand for Christ; they are dishonoring Him openly before the rest of the congregation.

We are depending on our sermons, and our sermons are proving undependable; we need to say the word to such men; and, believe me, in my experience, such men have been surprised for years that we have never said the word to them. They have wondered why we haven't come and talked to them on the subject of personal religion, as Dr. Adams's trustee in the Madison Square Church was surprised. When Dr. Adams came up of a Sunday night after the service to talk with him, the man looked him in the face and said:

"Why haven't you done this before? For months now I have wondered why my pastor never said a single immediate and personal word to me about my own individual salvation." Men are waiting for it, and men are wondering why we do not give it.

Did you ever go over your church and pick out the men who have pews and the members of their families sitting in those

pews who were unsaved, and hand them over to your officers or to your active church women, to your workers who were active in everything else, but were shrinking back when you called them to real spiritual personal service? I went over my pew record last spring, and I made up a list, and it astonished me, and when I carried it to my session, the governing body of our church, and told Elder So and So that there sat twenty men and women, or young men and women, right around him in church Sunday after Sunday, that had never confessed Christ, and asked him whether he had ever spoken to Mr. So and So or Mrs. So and So, and he confessed that he hadn't, I saw one reason why the preaching of the Gospel wasn't as effective as it ought to be in that church.

How about that boy in your family? You go to your minister and you say to him "I don't know why it is that I cannot get hold of my boy; won't you come and talk with him and pray with him?" and you have failed to say the personal word and give the personal touch in tactfulness and kindness and persistence, and there is where your whole effort and your whole aspiration and desire have broken down, and broken down at your own door. Personal work, it is the summons I give this afternoon. I have no other summons to give to the Church to-day. Personal work on the part of the minister, on the part of the church officer, on the part of the Sunday-school teacher, on the part of the rank and file of our membership, and until we have consecrated ourselves to that kind of work, believe me, my dear friends, we shall pray to an unanswering Heaven and feel not so much as the first drops of rain in the shower for which we have been waiting all these years, and all these years upon years. God makes us personal workers.

I went up into New England to preach my yearly sermon to one of the colleges. A splendid college it is, and there is a strong religious life there, though not enough, it seems to me, of evangelistic life, and certainly not enough of personal work. I preached my sermon to the boys. I chose after I got there a different sermon from what I had expected to preach, ignoring the old professors back on the last pews and their cultured families, and just trying to get hold of the boys' hearts with a very simple, almost commonplace Gospel message. I had preached to them every year for years. I had lived among these boys,

for whenever I go there I stay in the chapter house of the fraternity of which I am a member. I lived my life before them. I prayed for those boys. I had preached to them, as I say, and I had preached my best sermons to them with this thing in mind, the best Gospel sermons I could preach, but many of them in my own chapter of the fraternity of which I am a member had never been brought to confess Christ. I made an appointment that afternoon in the Young Men's Christian Association Building, where I would meet those who wanted to talk to me upon the subject, and one of the members of the fraternity chapter said:

"I will go and show you the way." He knew perfectly well that I knew the way; I had been there years enough to know the way, and I thought there was something in the wind. I took him along with me, and when we got up into the room I said:

"Now, while we are waiting, suppose we talk upon the subject of religion." I saw his eyes begin to water; I knew there was something behind it; and then he said:

"Yesterday was my twenty-first birthday, and I got such a letter from my mother in yesterday morning's mail; it just broke my heart in two. She said: 'Are you going to pass your twenty-first birthday and not be a Christian? I cannot bear to think of it. I pray of you to give your heart before nightfall to Jesus Christ. I have sent this letter just so it would reach you in the first mail in the morning, that you might have all day and all the evening to think it over; and when you go to bed won't you just kneel down and give yourself to Christ?' I am so glad you have spoken to me; it is just the time to speak to me," and we got down on our knees and I prayed for the fellow, and he prayed for himself.

The next morning, when I was on the way to the station in a cab, a snowy morning, at seven o'clock, he stood there by the roadside waiting for the cab to come along. He hailed the driver and stopped it, pulled the door open with a great jerk, and putting his head in, said: "It is all settled, I settled the matter before I went to bed last night, and you don't know what happiness is in my soul." Everything else had failed but personal work. O, friends, may we not, many of us, trace our failure back to the same dereliction? God help us to consecrate ourselves this morning to personal work in our homes, in our social circles, in our churches, and God will honor the per-

sonal touch which we give in His name and for His sake every time we use it.

Let me tell you the story of the death of my old Adirondack driver, old Harvey. He had driven me for hundreds of miles over those mountain roads; we had been about everywhere together; and I had broached the subject of religion, as we sometimes say, in an indirect way; I had gone away around the barn to talk about these things to him, but I had never until the week before his death got right to the point of trying to grip his soul with my own personal touch, and I talked to him in a low voice, as I sat on the front seat next to him all that drive through, about becoming a Christian. I didn't make very much progress, but I said, "I am going to preach down in the mountain church next Sunday night." My friend, Dr. Smith, and I had the habit then, as we have this summer, of preaching alternately Sunday nights, just to the guides and the mountain people, just trying to get hold of those among whom we summer. It was my turn to preach the next Sunday night, and said: "I am going to preach next Sunday night. Won't you come and hear me?"

"Well," he said, "if you put it that way"—and one never likes to put it that way, and yet we are willing to be all things to all men, and even to put down our modesty and pride—"if you put it that way, I will come."

The very next morning one of my neighbors in the mountains said: "Did you hear that Harvey was very sick?" I said, "No, I will go and see him." I went straight to his house, and the son said: "You cannot see him this morning. He is critically ill, and the doctor said no one must go in but the nurse." I went the next day and he was worse, and still they wouldn't let me in. The third day I went, and the little granddaughter came with the tears rolling down her face and said: "Grandpa has just died." The next day was Sunday, and that day I went down to the mountain church, and I preached the sermon that I had prepared with Harvey in mind. I had imagined him sitting in the pew, and my preaching the Word, trying to get the seed into the soul, but old Harvey wasn't there. And do you know, I couldn't see those people; that was just what might be called an absent-minded sermon; my mind ran down the road to a little mountain house where old Harvey, my Adirondack driver, lay cold in death.

And the next morning, when we held

his funeral service, and they asked me to take part, I said, "I cannot speak, and I cannot pray, even; I do not feel that I am worthy to go to the throne; I will just read a few passages of Scripture." When I fell in line with the country folk, trying to do what they do, though I dislike it, and walked around his casket, as I drew near, the plate on it disappeared, I didn't see that; I don't think I saw Harvey's face—I loved him dearly, too—but I saw instead the inscription on that casket put there by divine hands, and it read: "A lost opportunity," and though I am sound to the core theologically, I believed then and I believe this day, that it was more of a lost opportunity to me than it was even to old Harvey. There are men dying down in your town, and over in your little country village, and in yours, and in yours, and in every case it is a lost opportunity.





Supreme Moments in Human Life.

Rev. George C. Lorimer, D.D.

MARK vi:22.

"Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee."

MATT. xv:28.

"Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

THESE texts bring before us two monarchs—Herod and Jesus; and two women—the one a daughter, the other a mother. Notably great is the contrast between the rulers. Herod, lord over many people, was slave to his own passions; and, though tetrarch in outward dignity, was basely servile in inward spirit. His contemptibleness was conspicuous. He was self-willed, self-indulgent, weak and wayward; a sovereign whose animalistic nature was engrossed in sensuality, and whose government was subordinated to personal gain and self-gratification. How different was Jesus. No glittering court symbolizing His majesty, no regal insignia asserting His authority, and yet the native grandeur of His character was such that it drew obedient subjects to His feet. He walked the earth crownless, throneless—yea, oftentimes without a place in which to rest His weary head—and still the multitudes thought they could discern beneath the peasant's garb the true nobility of a God-anointed one. He was pure, gentle, self-forgetful, self-sacrificing, swaying a scepter in which the jewels of love studded the gold of power. While these monarchs were so widely separated from each other, they were possessed of large resources, gifts, wealth, honors, which they could confer on the deserving, or on any who should secure their favor.

The affluence of the Herodian prince, however, was not as limitless as that of the

princely peasant; for the revenues of the former were bounded by the capabilities of a meagre district in an impoverished land, while those of the latter were commensurate with the inexhaustible treasures of the universe. The first could only say to his favorite, "Ask whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom," but the second could reply to his importunate suppliant, while knowing and realizing the boundlessness of human desires, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." One could give according to the littleness of Judea, and only a part of that; the other according to the vastness of heaven, and all of that; for he could say, what Paul subsequently wrote for the joy of the saints, "I am able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think"; "for all things are yours; whether Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Two women stand before these potentates. In Herod's castellated palace a feast has been given to soldiers and "chief estates of Galilee," and during the merry evening the daughter of Herodias has danced in presence of the brilliant company. Her graceful movements and her graceless freedom, the poetry of her form and the harmony of her gestures, have quite captivated heart and eye of the luxurious tetrarch. There she stands, radiant in youthful beauty, panting for breath; her bosom heaving with excitement, and her proud eye flashing the consciousness of her triumph. Wanton creatures, personally attractive and gifted with genius, in every generation have been able to fascinate the affluent and the great, and have sometimes captivated those whose wisdom and age should have lifted them above the influence of such Circean charms. No wonder, then, that Herod was enchanted, when so many better men have yielded to the seductive spell. From his canopied throne he speaks—from that seat where justice should reign in calm and awful majesty, but which is now usurped by fire-eyed, lawless passion—he speaks, and lays at the feet of a giddy girl one-half of his kingdom. The lives of his people, their hard-earned wealth, their homes and simple joys, combined with office, rank and power—the prizes for which the mighty toil and strive—are placed at the disposal of the frail daughter of a notorious mother.

It is Salome's opportunity, the decisive moment, the time of times, which, if carefully seized and wisely improved, will im-

part to her future life a purer lustre and a fairer charm. Surely dancer was never more highly complimented, and surely none ever reached a more important crisis! How will she choose? How will she avail herself of her unexpected happy fortune? What will she demand? What gift solicit, what service claim, what honor seek? Unable to decide, too much agitated to rely on her own weak judgment, she hastens to her mother's side that her counsel may assist her choice. Leaving for a little while her parent to point out the way in which the golden opportunity may best be coined, let us glance at the other woman who has sought the favor of a mightier prince than Herod.

History has not preserved her name; only Mark records that she was a Greek, a Syrophoenician, one of a race despised by the self-righteous Jews. Evidently she was not rich, certainly not young, and her heart was burdened with a heavy load of care. From her humble home she had ventured forth, if possibly to meet with Him whose fame as a gracious healer was spread throughout the whole land, and who in His compassion might relieve her sore distress by restoring her afflicted daughter. She found Him on the borders of Tyre and Sidon, resting in some modest house, surrounded by His disciples, and apparently averse to give her audience. Thrusting aside every obstacle in her way, she prostrated herself at His feet and cried, "O Lord, thou Son of David! my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." About her person there was probably nothing attractive but her earnestness, nothing persuasive or interesting but her pathos. Her greeting was not such as delighted Salome, and at first the king seemed inclined to scorn her suit. His answer to her impassioned appeal, "Lord, help me!" sounds harshly to our ear, and to her must have been as the knell of all her hopes. Commentators explain that He employed such language to test her faith and stimulate her persistency; and if they are correct, His design was eminently successful. She would not be silenced, she would not be thwarted; coldness could not chill her, indifference could not discourage her, rudeness could not subdue her, and cruel scorn could not daunt her indomitable will.

Before such energy of faith, such vigor of determination, such consistency of appeal, the king could not maintain his real or assumed attitude of rejection. He yielded: "Oh, woman, great is thy faith!" But he does not accede to her request—he does

more. He does not say thy daughter shall be healed. That had been to bound his favor, to measure His gift, and He would honor her as she had honored Him. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." That was His form of answer to her petition, an answer implying that on her decision the future of herself, her home and her child depended. She had but to will what she desired, and whether it was the restoration of her daughter, the increase of her worldly goods, or any other longed-for blessing, she would receive the same. Her golden opportunity had arrived. The crucial moment of her life, as in the life of Salome, had come at last, and her own choice must decide the rest.

It is Shakespeare who writes: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at its flood leads on to fortune." So also Schiller in *The Piccolomini*:

"Seize, seize the hour,
Ere it slips from you. Seldom comes the mo-
ment
In life, which is indeed sublime and mighty."

Never was there truer sentiment. What we have seen befall these women is but a picture of what is sure to occur in every life. Every human being is sooner or later brought face to face with advantageous circumstances, which, if improved, will result in manifold blessings. To employ a current expression, "every man has his chance"; his "chance" to free himself from over-mastering evil, to carve for himself a name and place in this busy world, and a "chance" to rise above the earthly temper of his spirit and approach to the heavenly purity of the saved. With a burst of virtuous indignation an English writer, contemplating the miserable lot of thousands of our fellow beings in the world, and comparing it with what may possibly be their condition in the great hereafter, exclaims, as though singular in the conviction, "I believe that God will give every man a chance." I do not question the soundness of the faith. But I think we are too much inclined to the opinion that the wretched masses of people who excite our compassion have never enjoyed the opportunity of being other than they are, or of acting differently than they do; and that what has been denied them here ought to be afforded them in the world beyond. I do not wish to discuss in this discourse the relations of the present to the future: nor is it necessary, for it is clear to my mind that every soul in the course of its earthly history is brought, perhaps more

than once, under conditions favorable to its highest good.

There are few men who have made shipwreck of themselves, who have gone through a series of years from disaster to disaster, and who have been a snare and a curse to others, who cannot on looking back see where they have made fatal mistakes, and where, if they had acted other than they did, the outcome would have been vastly different. Who is there that cannot recall some auspicious moment when unseen hands threw open wide the portals to success, when a competency, if not affluence, was placed within their reach; who cannot remember some precious season when the heart was moved as by invisible angels to repentance, and when aspirations to a nobler and purer life were awakened and almost fanned into a flame? Perhaps it was an early manhood, when hopes ran high, when courage was abiding, and when a proud consciousness prevailed that no enemy could daunt, no obstacle impede, that suddenly, unexpectedly, the testing hour came. As we now mournfully look back we see if, when the war broke out, when the fire raged, when the estate descended to us, when the enterprise was proposed, or when the way of retreat was opened from some questionable calling, we had only been equal to the emergency, we would be immeasurably better off in worth of character and estate than we are. It may have happened in later years that we were brought to "where two roads meet," and at their junction paused irresolute, realizing the immense importance of our decision, and now regretting that we did not choose the one we then declined to tread.

That was a supreme moment in the history of Columbus when he craved a drink of water at a convent door, when the good prior, drawn to him by the grandeur of his plans, supplied him with letters of introduction which opened the way for the discovery of a new world. Without this opportunity his magnificent schemes might have miscarried; but with it how many men would never have succeeded. That was a supreme moment to Martin Luther when the pope's bull was published in his German home, and when his usefulness and happiness centered in its defiant destruction. How few would have the courage in these days to commit it, as he did, to the flames, and yet had not the reformer done so he would have regretted it all his days. That was a supreme moment in the career of Ignatius Loyola when, on the walls of Pam-

peluna, the cannon-shot fractured his legs and forced him into seclusion, from whence the hot-blooded Spanish soldier might have come forth a saint, but instead came forth a Jesuit. That was a supreme moment when Wallenstein halted between loyalty to the empire and his own aggrandizement. That was a supreme moment in the turbulent life of Nelson, when he turned his blind eye to the signal that had been hoisted for him to retire from before Copenhagen and continued the fight for the honor of his country. It was then that his relation to the victory at Trafalgar was practically decided. That was a supreme moment to Gen. Grant when he was appointed to command in the southwest, and made it possible for him at last to receive the sword of Gen. Lee; and yet how many might have fought on the Cumberland who would only have demonstrated their unfitness to lead an army on the James.

Such, also, was the moment in the life of Napoleon, when Barras proposed in the hour of the Convention's peril that the young general should command its meagre forces. And thus, to every one, in great degree or small, comes the favorable opportunity, the hour for which all previous hours have been made, the great divide from whose summit the traveler will rush down either into the chilly valleys of the north or into the warm, sunny, flowery vales of the south. That is a supreme moment in life when the lad becomes distinctly conscious of the great world of nature that lies around him, and hears its merry voices sounding in wind and waves, murmuring in leaves of trees, and warbling of birds, and saying: "Ask what thou wilt, and even to the half of my kingdom will I give you." That is a supreme moment, too, when the youth is brought into the presence of the mighty dead, who survive for evermore in their recorded thoughts, and whose shades, bending lovingly over the inquiring mind, seem to whisper: "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." That, also, is a moment never to be forgotten when the sacred majesty of religion first sheds its holy halo on the dusty path of life, when inspired men of God and the exalted Christ come near the soul and breathe in its inner chambers the divine messages of grace and peace. Supreme moments each to be followed by others in their time supreme as well; but by none of whose magnitude and solemn import shall ever surpass these more familiar ones which are the common heritage of all.

Like the Syrophenician woman, many

seek unfalteringly and unweariedly the more promising circumstances of earthly life, and hear at last the cheering words, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt"; while others, thoughtless and unconcerned, pursue their way laughing and dancing, and are startled and surprised when the voice of fortune assures them that whatsoever they ask shall be granted. But, alas! when the favorable hour comes how many fail to realize its significance, and know not how to choose, or at the best choose wildly, madly. Poor Salome hastens to her mother, and returns to Herod with the sanguinary demand for the head of John the Baptist. Was there nothing worthier her ambition than such a ghastly object? Would it not have been nobler to have taken some of the possessions laid at her feet, and to have consecrated them to the elevation of the degraded, the instruction of the ignorant, and the succoring of the poor? Nobler, and wiser, too, beyond all question; but no, the supreme moment is perverted, degraded, abused. Indignation at the faithfulness of God's servants, sees only in the turn affairs have taken an opening through which the spirit of revenge may enter the dark prison with a gleaming axe and on his helpless form expend its malignant cruelty. And thus have thousands chosen, and thus are thousands choosing every day.

The majority of people look upon their opportunities simply as means for self-gratification, self-importance, and self-aggrandizement. If they do not employ them to murder others they use them to assassinate themselves. They do not discern their significance, do not follow them up with vigor, and so lose the advantages which they are fitted to confer. What do you do, young man, when, after much seeking, a situation was provided for you in a house where everything was offered to assure success? Did you grow negligent, careless, spending your nights in riot and your days in shirking work? How did you carry yourself, my friend, when fortune was inherited, and you were suddenly transferred from a realm of poverty to a domain of affluence? Did you immediately set about the easy task of proving to community the truth of the adage, "Place a beggar on horseback and he will ride to the devil," and illustrate its veraciousness in your own miserable person? What course did you pursue when the much-coveted opportunity for distinguishing yourself came? When the post of honor was assigned you, which is always the post of danger, whether it be on the bat-

tle-field or in the sharp conflict between truth and error, and between right and wrong, what did you do? Betray your trust —run away? Well, if you did, you only formed part of a “goodly company” who have done likewise from the beginning of the world to the present. Very few indeed have been like the Syrophenician woman who understood the “signs of the times,” and had honest decision to make her opportunity tributary to the well-being of others. She willed that the striken one at home should be restored, that the devil which possessed her should be cast out, and the old peace and joy should reign again beneath the domestic roof. Others have been equally wise, and to-day we call them the world’s benefactors, heroes, leaders, friends, and we speak their names with tender accents born of love. But if men and women have not this discernment, if they do not recognize the spring-time when it comes, and fail to break the soil and prepare for golden harvests, let them not rail against God, and moodily contend that they have known only unbroken winter, and an ice-bound earth. Let them not, as too many do, bewail their lot, that nature has held them fast in a frozen sea, with frost-clouds resting on everything about them, as though the sun had not more than once rent a channel for them to the friendlier ocean.

The impression prevails that man is a creature of circumstances, and circumstances are repeatedly invoked to explain the success of one and to account for the failure of another. This is the usual plea of the unfortunate, who find some solace in laying on a scape-goat their weaknesses and stupidities. It is also the refuge of envy and malice from whence they can snarl at those who have tramped on to victory. But they are deceiving themselves. Circumstances are indeed indispensable to grand achievements, but they are not everything. It is not enough for Herod and Christ to say: “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt”; for whether the generous overture is really made musical or discordant will depend on the key which the will aspires to strike. “As thou wilt,” said Herod to the daughter, and she chose a death’s-head; “as thou wilt,” said Christ to the mother, and she chose life and health. Circumstances never made a man, but it is the man always that improves the circumstances, and causes them to yield their richest treasures and their sweetest fragrance. What you may be, what you will be, rests with yourself and with no one else, and nothing else. Hegel

has said that "the essence of spirit is freedom"; even as "the essence of matter is gravity"; intimating that there is in us a power of volition that cannot be explained by any mechanical system, or by any metaphysical subtleties whatever. Why one man rides upon the tide to fame and fortune, and another goes down beneath its swirling waters, no one can explain. It is enough for us to know that the deepest thinkers find the secret in the men themselves, though unsolvable, and impenetrable, or at best, if not inconceivable, certainly inexpressible by the poor organs of human speech.

Schiller writes, when alluding to one who allows himself to be influenced by the stars:

"You'll wait upon the stars, and on their hours.
'Til the earthly hour escapes you. O, believe me,
In your own bosom are your destiny's stars.
Confidence in yourself, prompt resolution,
This is your Venus! and the sole malignant,
The only one that harmeth you is doubt."

The Bible confirms philosophy at this point, verifies the instincts of humanity, and assumes throughout that "man is his own star," and that his position in time and his destiny in eternity are determined by his own volition. He is what he willed to be; he will be what he wills to be; and if he never is what he might be, it is because he would not be what he could be. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" indignantly asks God; "and not that he should return to his ways and live?" This solemn inquiry is repeated in the Old Testament; and Christ declares in the New: "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

The prophet represents the Almighty as saying: "Oh, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then thy peace had been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea"; and Christ pathetically exclaims: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not"; "Ye would not come to me that ye might have life." Such passages could be multiplied, and many others whose burden is, that "Whosoever will may come and drink of the water of life freely." Here we touch on the borders of a great mystery. We know that God is spoken of as omnipotent, and we wonder often, if He is, why he permits evil to continue, and man to remain in suffering or sorrow. But may it not be that we speak too absolutely on this subject, and that, after all, some limits to the Divine power in reality exists?

I suppose it will not be claimed that even He could put an atom in two places at one and the same time. But if He is bounded by the laws of matter, why not equally so by the laws of spirit? Having made the soul free, may not freedom be a perpetual restraint on the exercise of His power, so that He can only plead with His erring creature, furnish assistance and means of deliverance, but never break through the barriers that the free spirit may interpose between itself and His purposes of mercy? If this is conceivable, it brings us a little nearer the solution of the question why a God of might and goodness does not sweep by one exercise of His power all forms of evil from this suffering earth; and it sets in a clearer light the central truth of this discourse, that favorable crisis, supreme moments, and glorious opportunities are as nothing in themselves, and depend on man himself for their value and their profit.

Blessings are responsibilities in disguise. When adverse circumstances disappear, and when our surroundings wear an air of prosperity, obligation proportionately increases. We shall render an account to God for our abuse or neglect of His gracious and helpful providences, and will find our souls filled with bitter regrets if we shall esteem them lightly. .

“Of all the sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, it might have been.”

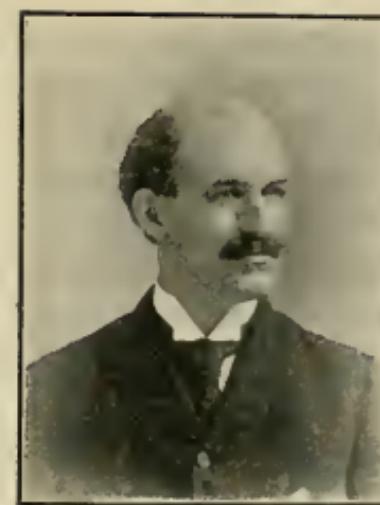
Picture to yourself wretched Salome with her bloody trophy in her hands, the mute lips of the murdered saint reproaching, as the living John never did when he thundered in Herod’s ear his words of awful warning. All through her future life will she be haunted by the memory that she had her opportunity, and madly clotted it with blood. Never can she recall the past, never restore what she has wasted; responsible for what it might have been, she plods heavily to the grave, conscious that it can never be what it ought to be. Mr. Robert Browning in “Paracelsus” sings :

“ ‘Tis only when they spring to heaven that angels
Reveal themselves to you; they sit all day
Beside you, and lie down at night by you.
Who care not for their presence, muse or sleep;
And all at once they leave you, and you know
them.”

And some one has said, “We prize our blessings when they are flown,” but all our regrets, weeping and remorse will never—never can—bring them back again. The angels that once were nevermore return to those who have slighted their presence and

scorned their favor. Then cling to them while they are with you. Pray them to abide; or, if they must in a little time be gone, learn while you may, each word and sentence of the message that they bring. Especially learn of Christ. Not once but often has He spoken to you; not once but often has He drawn close to your soul with promises of eternal blessing. A precious privilege, a wondrous honor, to be the object of His solicitude and the creature of His thoughtful love! Is He near you now? Do you hear His footfall—do you catch the sound of His voice? It is to you, beloved, the moment of moments; cast yourself at His feet, and realizing the need that is in you for cleansing, the need that is in you for power to help others, and realizing the world's need for earnest laborers to cast out the devils that infest it—making its burdens yours—like the Syrophenician woman, pray: “O, Lord, thou son of David, help me!”





Sowing and Reaping.

Rev. William C. Stinson, D. D.

GAL. vi:7, 8.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

THIS is a moral as well as a physical world. It is governed by moral laws. Man is a moral being and he is subject to these laws. This does not mean that he is under the bondage or tyranny of law. There is a disposition in many quarters to regard man as the victim of seen or unseen forces which either make or break him. There is a false teaching to-day which says there is a predetermined course marked out for each man by an arbitrary, partial power, and each individual must follow this pre-destined course. Then there is a philosophy of fate and chance, and they who believe it look upon the soul as in a lifelong game of battle-door and shuttle-cock. Too many persons regard their lives as marbles flung out indiscriminately upon the bagatelle-board of human existence. They bump against obstacles, wobble around life's honors and go bounding and rolling toward some unknown destiny. Pathetic, indeed, is it to see the persons who have yielded to such teaching. Many of them have ceased to struggle and ceased to care. Baffled, discomfitted by the strange and hard experiences through which they have passed, they have lost, or well nigh lost, their faith in human volition and divine providence. It is pitiful to see them swept along like driftwood on a river, or hustled about like dead leaves in an autumn wind, victims of forces over which they cease to exert any control. Such fatalism expresses

itself this way: "I am an automaton, a puppet dangling on my distinctive wire, which fate holds with an unrelaxing grasp. I am not different, nor do I feel different, from my fellow men, but my eyes refuse to blink away the truth, which is that I am an automatic machine, a piece of clock-work, wound up to go for an allotted time, smoothly or otherwise, as the efficiency of the machine may determine." There is a fatalism which declares that the train is the world, we are the freight, fate is the track, death is the darkness, God is the engineer—but, alas! He is dead.

Much of modern fiction is saturated with the thought that heredity and environment are the all-powerful factors in human destiny, that personality counts for nothing, that every man is the ghost of his dead ancestors, who look through his eyes, speak in his word and act in his deeds. In other words, that human life is like a piece of shoddy cloth in the great mill of circumstance, which stands on the banks of the River of Time, and turns out the shabby lives of men and women.

It is against this morbid and erroneous conception of life that we raise a word of protest and warning. Heredity and environment are not to be underrated. They are powerful factors. Nor are they to be over-estimated; but I maintain that in every man there is an untainted power, something which passes from generation to generation untouched by change, and even though it may be shut in by evil conditions and tied to a thousand evil tendencies, yet it may and does frequently assert itself and show its superiority.

Man is morally free. Strip that statement of all theological sophistry and metaphysical subtlety; is it not true of every man here to-day that he has the power of moral choice? Your presence here is evidence of the existence of this power. The existence of this and every other evangelistic enterprise is based on the presumption that man can choose between the good and the evil. If you deny that, then it is useless to appeal to motives. You may as well close the avenues to academic honors and abolish courts of justice and penitentiaries. We preachers may as well close our churches and cease pleading with the consciences of men. Deny man's capacity of moral choice, and you deny man's personal accountability and destroy manhood itself.

There is the beautiful picture in the Gospel, brought out in the words of Jesus, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." What

does it mean? It means that even though the infinitely patient Saviour may stand and knock all day and all night at the door of your heart, He will never force His entrance. If He ever enters, it is because you heard Him knocking, and yourself withdrew the bolt, and, opening the door, you gave Him welcome. Man is morally free.

Man is also under law. You admit that of man's bodily nature, but there are laws moral as well as physical. Man's physical freedom consists in an adjustment of his body to these physical laws. So man's moral freedom consists in the adjustment of his spirit to moral laws. Both physical and moral laws find their gravitating centre in God. The God of Nature and the God of Morals are not two different Gods, but one and the same God. "Though there be that are called gods many, and lords many, yet to us there is but one God."

These laws are inexorable in their operation. We talk about breaking the laws of God, but that is careless speech. We break the laws of God? No. If we do not obey them, they break us. There is no more escaping the consequences of the violation of the moral law than there is of exemption from a broken body if you violate the law of gravitation. Man is under law.

Man is under the law of heredity. This means vastly more than the reproduction of the traits and characteristics of his parents. It means that he is not only heir to his environments, inheriting, for example, the lineaments of parents, birthplace, nursing, early training, and the like, but it means that he is also inheriting himself in himself. He is reproducing his own character. He is repeating himself in himself. Each repetition of an act is intenser than the preceding. Each bad act becomes the sire of many bad acts, even as each good act becomes the sire of many good acts. In other words, he illustrates in himself the law of the harvest, "Whosoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." The law holds absolutely in the vegetable world. The farmer knows full well if he sows wheat he will reap not tares, but wheat, and vice versa. The same law holds in the spiritual world. If a man sows righteousness, he will reap from that righteousness, not sinfulness, but righteousness. You cannot sow one kind of seed and reap another kind of harvest. This truth was brought out in a memorable conversation between a Galilean carpenter and a Judean rabbi. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Marvel not. You do not mar-

vel at the law of bodily inheritance. Why should you marvel at the law of spiritual inheritance? You must reap what you sow. There is no setting aside the natural, inevitable outworking of the law. Will you expect a spiritual harvest from a physical sowing? If you sow to the flesh, you must reap to the flesh. If you sow to the spirit, you must reap to the spirit. There is no passing of the flesh over into the spirit. That is the reason why Christ said, "Ye must be born again, anew, from above." That was not a new, special edict by the founder of Christianity. It is written in the very constitution of human nature. Christ discovered it and set it forth for our instruction and salvation. Man is under the law of the harvest.

The harvest gathered is ever larger than the seed sown. He who sows sparingly reaps sparingly. He who sows bountifully reaps bountifully. For example, a man sows the love of money. What does he reap? Dollars and cents? Possibly; but one thing he does reap—an intensifying love of money. As the growth is ever larger than the germ, he grows fonder and fonder of money. It is not to be wondered at, if he grows covetous, becomes more and more grasping and grinding. Nor need we wonder if we see him growing miserly, until the habit of miserliness is ever becoming more and more confirmed. What is true of covetousness and avarice is also true of intemperance, indolence, skepticism, and the whole train of moral evils. The crop is ever larger than the seed. He that sows to the wind shall reap to the whirlwind. That is to say, that every man by reason of his moral choice, and in sheer virtue of the law of the harvest, is ever more intensifying his moral character. Do you not see this all around you? Do you not see bad men growing worse and worse, and good men becoming better and better?

Behold the illustration of this law in the case of Pharaoh. You will remember that God commanded Pharaoh through Moses to let the children of Israel go free from their Egyptian bondage. Now, Pharaoh was a mere moral agent. He had the ability to obey or disobey the divine command. He chose to disobey. God treated Pharaoh as a free man, declining to interfere with his own divine law of heredity, but allowing it to take its natural course. Now, in the book of Exodus, we have the constant interchange of expressions. "God hardened Pharaoh's heart;" "Pharaoh hardened his own heart;" "Pharaoh's heart was hard-

ened." Now, the question arises, Did God harden Pharaoh's heart? Not directly; perish the thought. But as God had made Pharaoh a free man under the moral law, then indirectly He hardened Pharaoh's heart? In other words, God's doing was the occasion, but Pharaoh's doing was the cause. Pharaoh chose to disobey, but disobedience grew upon him, so that by persistent refusals to heed the Divine Command, he reaped a dreadful crop of stubbornness, obstinacy and hardening of the heart, or moral paralysis. So that in the last analysis, Pharaoh hardened his own heart. "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God is untried of evil, and He Himself tempted no man; but each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed; then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death." Be not deceived.

Pharaoh's case is typical. It is a daily phenomenon. Pharaoh acted throughout just as he pleased. He was cruel and proud and stubborn, and he acted out of his own nature. He chose to sow pride, and he reaped what he sowed—obstinacy, and the harvest of pride and obstinacy, of course, was larger than the original seed.

Pharaoh's guilt has ever been the guilt of many. Pathetic, indeed, the instances of men, otherwise great, who have permitted the hardening of their moral faculties through sheer disobedience of God's laws. How many are callous to distinctively sacred influences, proof alike against the promises of God's grace and the menaces of God's law. There was a process in the hardening. In the days of youth they refused to remember God; they were carried away by life's gaieties, sowed the seed of procrastination or neglect of the Saviour's gracious invitation. Now, in mature years, choice is hardened into habit, and during the days of middle life or old age they are reaping what they sowed, in the careless, reckless days of youth. "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given." Whosoever is susceptible to truth, to him shall truth be given, and he shall have abundance; with the increase of susceptibility shall come an increase of truth, and with the increase of truth shall come an increase of susceptibility. But whosoever is not susceptible to truth, from him shall be taken away even what he hath; not only his opportunity for hearing truth, but also his capacity for truth itself. "Take away the talent from him." Is there a talent for music, for painting, for business?

So is there a talent for godliness. And this talent abused or disused is forfeited.

There is a disease called ossification, as when an artery is changed into bone. So there is such a thing as moral ossification, or spiritual petrefaction. Have you never read of a conscience seared with a red-hot iron? There is such a thing as a cauterized sense.

Let me conclude with two thoughts:

First.—Each man is responsible for his own character. Each man has the liberty of sowing what he pleases. The harvest that he reaps is the aggregate of his habits,—that is to say, his character. Accordingly, then, it is for each man to say whether he will be good or bad; whether he will grow better or worse. Conditions and circumstances may be partially responsible for your character, but the final, ultimate responsibility is with yourself. Only in one sense can you hold God responsible, and that is for the laws under which you have your moral being and growth; but those laws include your moral freedom, without which you would not have the blessing of manhood itself.

Second.—Each man is responsible for his destiny. He is responsible for his destiny because he is responsible for his character. Character determines destiny. A profound truth lies in the adage of Sallust,—“Every man is the architect of his own fortune.” Daily character is shaping your future destiny.

“For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays,
Are the blocks with which we build.”

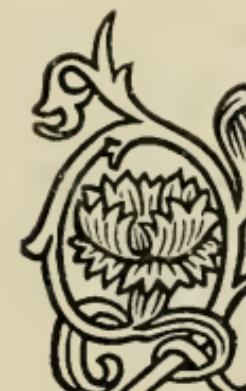
In a very real sense, the future is a state of retribution. You call that a hard doctrine of Christ’s teaching. Christ did not create it. He simply declared it. It was in existence long before His appearance. It was manifest at the very beginning of human history. What does retribution mean? Retributing—paying back in the same coin—and that at the fearful rate of compound interest. He that is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous still; he that is holy, let him be holy still. Take heed how you live. “Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.”

God grant that these words may come with a special appeal to those of you who are young, you who are in the plastic, formative period of life. You are now electro-typing your eternal destiny. It is easier to become a Christian to-day than ten years

hence, even as it was easier ten years ago than to-day.

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy." "Those who seek me early shall find me." Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth; before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh when thy moral nature, no longer susceptible and formative, shall become confirmed in the habit of sin, forever petrified into adamantine hardness.

You are at the sowing end of the harvest field. God help you to sow pure seed that you may reap a golden harvest. And if there is one here to-day who feels helpless in the clutch of appetites, who seems to be held in the grip of a giant, on the brink of a precipice, and is crying,—"Who shall deliver me? who will help me?" to him I say, "There is a helper and deliverer; He stands at the door of your heart; listen to His words,—'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne. Even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne.' 'He that hath an ear, let him hear.' 'I will take away the heart of stone and give the heart of flesh.'" "





The Divine Appeal to Man's Will.

Rev. E. E. Chivers, D. D.

JOHN v:40.

"Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

MATT. xxv:37.

"How often would I * * * and ye would not."

ON almost every battlefield," says one writer, "there is some one spot where the issue of the battle is decided." He cites as an illustration the field of Waterloo. Wellington, "the iron duke," had established himself and his forces in a strong position. The key to that position was an old Flemish farm-house of brick, called Hougoumont. This house, with its outbuildings and garden, was enclosed by a high brick wall. Beyond lay an orchard and a stretch of woods, with a pond, which served as a moat. The walls of this stronghold were loopholed for musketry fire, and a scaffolding was erected to enable the troops within the garden to fire over the wall. It was an almost impregnable position. Against it Napoleon hurled his forces. Troops were massed against it. Cannon and rifle were turned upon it. Column after column of French soldiery swept towards it, and assailed it with fiery valor. The battle raged and surged about it for hours. The woods adjoining were several times taken and retaken; but the chateau itself remained in the keeping of the British. The British troops held it firmly to the last, and "the iron duke" won his Waterloo.

"Similarly," says our writer, "in every human being there is one element about which the battle of life is fought. It is the will. * * * The whole contest of good and evil over our humanity is as to the control of the will. * * * As goes the

will, so goes the man—for time and for eternity." This is the regnant power in human nature. It is the imperial faculty which makes choices and decisions.

*"John, what do you do that for?" asked a father of his son, who was performing some curious and unusual movements around the room. "Oh, I do it because I want to, father," was the reply. The fact and the philosophy of the will are expressed in that simple statement.

"I do it—because—I want to." The child refers his action to himself. He does it. This is the assertion of the man concerning all his acts and courses of conduct. Whatever may be the theories of the philosopher as to the freedom of the will, every man feels that practically he is free. His whole mental being rises in protest against any scheme of necessity that would rob him of his freedom and reduce him to a mere automaton. He knows that he is free; that what he does is his own doing; that the spring of action is within. And the lad finds the occasion, the moving cause, of his activity in his own desire. No constraint is brought to bear upon him from without. He simply wants to do a certain thing, and he does it. The actions of the man are, in like manner, determined by his own desires, preferences, choices. He is not bound, in regard to his actions, by any outward constraint. The entire conduct of his life—its domestic relations, its business and social arrangements, proceeds upon the conviction that the will is free.

This will in man is as forceful as it is free. Indeed, so striking are its achievements, that its power to overcome difficulties and to bring things to pass is expressed in the maxim, which is almost accepted as an axiom: "Where there is a will there is a way." Many a youth who started in life under unpromising conditions has said to himself: "I will," and his sturdy determination has made for him a way to a thorough education or to a successful business or professional career. Men have gathered themselves up in the face of sickness, and even of death itself, resolved that they would live, if living were a possibility; and the very resolve has been a tonic, quickening vitality and bringing back health. Men have faced difficulties, and by sheer force of will have taken adverse circumstances as by the throat, and compelled them to yield. Obstacles have been brushed aside as though they had been but a feather. There is that

*The Will in Theology. A. H. Strong, D. D.

in thorough resolution that savors almost of omnipotence. To think that we are able is almost to be so; to determine upon attainment is often attainment itself. "You can only half will" were the disdainful words of the resolute Suwarroo to people who failed.

This power, of course, has its limitations. There are many things—things, too, which are vitally related to the development of character—that lie altogether outside the range of our choosing or willing. We have no choice as to the country or condition into which we are born, or as to the influences that touch and mould us in infancy and early life; we cannot shape at will the circumstances that play upon our lives; but it is within our province and power to determine whether we will breast adverse conditions, or weakly and ignobly yield to them. It is for us to decide whether we will make the most and the best of ourselves, whatever the setting of circumstances in which our lives are placed. We can decide whether we will make good or evil the aim and end of life's pursuit. In this region—the region of moral choices—the will is sovereign. We are not as mere straws upon the water, tossed to and fro in helplessness by every breath of wind and every eddying wave; we have within us the power of the swimmer, and can strike out and buffet the waves. Herein lies the "manliness of manhood, that a man has reason for what he does, and has a will in doing it."

To this element of power—this determining element—in human nature, as well as to reason, conscience, sensibility, the Gospel makes appeal. This is after all the key position. The outposts may be taken and re-taken; but the issue of life's Waterloo depends upon the masonry of this central stronghold. Reason may assent to the teachings and claims of the Gospel; the conscience may be stirred to intensest activity, uttering its imperative in clearest tones, and enforcing it with highest sanctions; the sensibilities may be moved to their inmost depths; and yet the will may remain unsubdued. Not until the will yields is the victory of truth and love and righteousness won.

If we turn to the sacred Scriptures, we find in them everywhere a recognition of the human will, with all its powers and prerogatives; and an appeal, through persuasions of every conceivable kind, to influence aright its action. By command and prohibition, by entreaty and warning, by rich promise of grace and stern threatening

of judgment, is this appeal enforced; but nowhere is there even a suggestion of infringement upon the domain of man's freedom of choice. Boundless persuasions there are; but the thought of coercion is as alien to the spirit of the Gospel and the thought of God as it is inconsistent with the nature and prerogatives of man.

Upon the opening pages of revelation, we have a picture of man in his primitive state. He is endowed with intellect or reason to discern the difference between right and wrong; he has sensibility that can be moved by these; he has freedom to do the one or the other. His moral condition is that of innocence—child-like innocence. From this condition he is to pass into that of mature moral manhood. This transition can be made only through a process of testing. The test is made. He is placed in a position where good is not the only thing that offers. An alternative is presented. The choice of good in preference to evil is set before him. Evil is chosen. Man tastes its bitter fruit of shame and fear, and entails upon the race a heritage of woe. But he is free in his doing. He does it because he wants to. There was a wilful turning away from the divine good, clearly expressed. In the face of a divine command, he yielded to temptation. He gave place to the temptation until that which it offered became his own preference and deliberate choice. Before him lay a blessed possibility of fellowship with God and of increasing likeness to Him. Fain would the Infinite One have seen that possibility realized. But there are some things that even gracious Omnipotence cannot do. A forced goodness is among the things that are not possible. It is a contradiction in terms. A moral agent must be free. A forced obedience has in it no moral value. You may keep a boy's hands out of mischief by tying them behind his back, but in so doing you also take away the power of beneficent activity. A man cannot be made virtuous by any fiat from without. Such a result can come only from the free working of his own will within him. God recognizes this, and acts upon it, even though man's free action seems to involve the thwarting of the divine desires, and to bring to the divine heart unspeakable pain. Man has the power to resist God. He can take a course that is contrary to all the expressed wishes and commands of God. He can say "No" to God; and God permits him to say it.

"See, I have set before thee this day life

and good, and death and evil; I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore, choose life that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, to obey His voice and to cleave unto Him; for He is thy life and the length of thy days." Such are the words in which Moses, as the representative of the Most High, addresses Israel at the close of his eventful life. He proclaims to them the law of God, with the blessings that would follow upon obedience; he rehearses all the gracious dealings of God with the people, and uses them as persuasions; but having set before them the practical alternatives, he leaves with them the final act of decision.

"Choose ye; choose ye;" this is the call which rings out again and again in the story of God's dealings with men. He ever seeks to bring men to the exercise of deliberate and settled choice. His dealings are gracious; His mercies are kind; His patience is long-suffering; He brings to bear on men sweet compulsions of love; He appeals to men by ten thousand ministries. But He ever respects the freedom with which He endowed man, and which is man's inalienable birthright.

The story of redemption is one of unceasing divine effort to win man's love and obedience. It is, from first to last, the unveiling of a love that seeks, even at cost of utmost sacrifice, to bring irresistible motives to bear upon man's will, and infinite persuasions upon his heart. That love finds its final expression in Jesus Christ. The words of the Lord Jesus are gracious utterances of it. The deeds of Jesus are outshinings of it. The cross of Jesus is the consummate exhibition of it. There God surrenders the inmost treasure of His heart to utmost experience of suffering and pain and death, that man might thereby be won to a responsive love. Wonderful is the attractive power of the cross! It moves men to repentance by the mightiest force of mercy; it draws and binds men to holy living by the enduring bonds of gratitude and love. God sends forth His servants to proclaim the love and sacrifice of that cross, and beseeches men, through their persuasions and entreatings, to be reconciled to Him. The ministry of the Holy Spirit waits upon the word to that same end. A thousand gracious influences press continually upon man's heart and will. Christ stands at the door and knocks. Gladly would

He come in and make men partakers of the joy of fellowship. He will take the place of a suppliant, in lowness of love and earnestness of longing; but He will not break open the door or enter an unwilling heart. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him."

We are prepared now to find that the Scriptures, which thus clearly recognize the will of man, and respect its freedom, charge home with telling force and directness upon man the responsibility for wrong choices, with all their dread issues. The effort is made in some quarters to shift the responsibility and blame for wrong doing. If it be not charged directly upon God, it is laid at the door of circumstances and attributed to the necessary outworking of certain natural laws. Conduct and character, we are told, are only the evolution of certain inherited tendencies, wrought out in given circumstances. We had nothing to do with the choosing of our inheritance, or of our environment. And we can no more help acting as we do under given conditions, we are told, than we can the texture of our brain. Against all such theorizings that which is deepest and noblest in us rises in revolt. It is an aspersion upon the dignity of our nature. Our consciousness gives the lie to it. It makes sin a mere figment of the imagination. The sense of sin is too deeply inwrought into universal consciousness to make any such view tenable or credible. We know that sin is a fact, and that our sinning is our own doing.

Very grave is the responsibility which our freedom entails. By our own choices and decisions we are shaping character and determining destiny. Temperament we are born with; character we have to make. Circumstances may be beyond our power; our choices are our own. Evil thoughts, like carrion birds, may darken the atmosphere about us; if they find a dwelling-place within, our own hands must build the nests. Surroundings may seem unfavorable to the development of a high type of character; but there is a power within reach that can re-enforce the will, and make us rise above circumstance. Sometimes rarely beautiful characters are developed amid most forbidding surroundings, like pure and fragrant lilies coming up from beds of ooze. Heredity and environment count for much; but they are not chargeable with everything. There is a personal element; and that personal element is, after all, the determining factor. Others may bring influ-

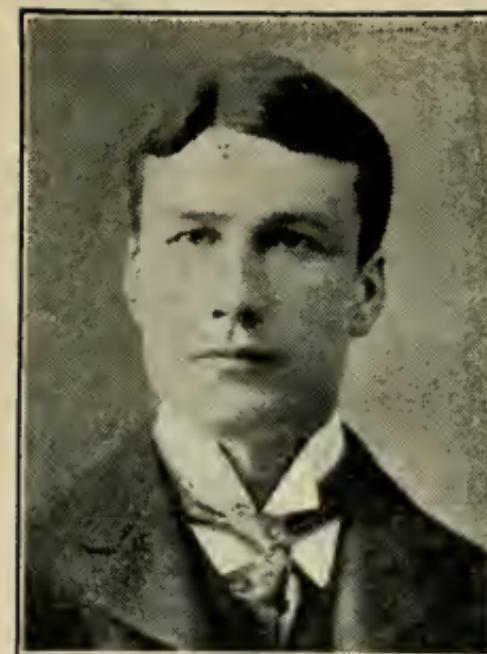
ences to bear upon us; our choices are our own. We cannot escape the responsibility of them.

Not only is it impossible to escape responsibility for our moral choices when made; we cannot evade the making of them. Whenever the claims of right are presented to us, or the temptation to wrong assails us, we cannot escape decision of some kind. As Professor James, in his essay on "The Will to Believe," puts it: "To say under circumstances, 'Do not decide, but leave the question open,' is itself a passional decision,—just like deciding Yes or No,—and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth." Sometimes we are pressed by direct appeal to moral decision. If not thus pressed, it still remains true that at any given time the ruling preference of the nature is either God-ward, or self-ward and sin-ward.

Our salvation cannot be thrust upon us even by God. God has, we may be sure, done all for us that He can do. "Christ finished our salvation on the divine side; we must finish it on the human. Christ made it possible; we must make it actual." We may thwart the working of grace. "I am come that ye might have life." That was the declared purpose of Christ's advent. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." That was the sad charge which Christ laid at the door of an unwilling and unbelieving people. "How often would I and ye would not." That was the lament of Christ over doomed and unrepentant Jerusalem. And the bitterness of it all was, and is, "It might have been otherwise."

Acting upon the lives of all of us are gracious divine agencies and influences. Other powers than those of darkness are at work; there are influences of grace and love to lift us up, and shape our lives to noble ends. Everything that even divine love can inspire or suggest; everything that gracious power can do;—all this is brought to bear upon us for our good; but in our wilfulness we resist God, and receive His grace in vain. This is the sad tragedy of life. The blame of it lies at our own doors. "Ye would not." "Ye will not."





At the Door of the Kingdom.

Robert E. Speer.

I THINK one of the most attractive and yet one of the most distressing stories in the Bible is the story told at the close of the Gospel of Mark regarding a certain lawyer who came up to the gates of the kingdom of God and refused to go in. It was the day, some of you will remember, on which Jesus Christ was involved in a great controversy. The three different factions of the Jews—the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, and the Herodians, who did not agree very much in anything else, agreed in this: that they hated Jesus, and they had prepared a trap in which they hoped that that day they might catch Him. Certain subtle questions they had phrased which they thought could be answered in only one or the other of two ways, and whichever way Jesus answered them they felt sure that they had Him snared. And they asked their questions, and Jesus answered them without evasion, without any shuffling, in a plain, straightforward way, and yet they found they were no better off when He had got through answering them than they were before. And there seems to have come a little hush over the crowd, while those who had been questioning Jesus stood in rather shame-faced silence, not knowing just what next to do. And thereupon, Mark tells us, a certain lawyer in the crowd spoke up and asked Jesus Christ a question. Maybe it was only a catch question that they used in the Jewish schools to test scholars on; maybe it was a question that had really puzzled this man, and he saw as he listened to Jesus

talking that day that here at last was a Teacher genuine, sincere, honest, open-minded, who might be able to answer his question for him. And he put his question to Jesus, and Jesus gave him a reply. It was a reply such as the man had never got to his question before, and for the moment he forgot himself, he forgot the crowd; he looked straight in Jesus' face and he said: "Master, Thou hast well said that there is only one God, and that our whole duty is to love Him, and that beside loving Him and our neighbor everything else is as nothing." And Jesus looked him back straight in the eye and said: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." I imagine He paused a moment then to see what the man would do. Doubtless the lawyer heard a little rustle behind him. Maybe somebody pulled the skirt of his robe; maybe somebody nudged him and told him he was going a little too far—at any rate, he suddenly remembered himself and the crowd that stood round him, and he sank back and was lost in the multitude, and we never hear of him again. He came right up to the door of the kingdom of God. The King of the kingdom stood at the door inviting him to come in, and because he was afraid of his surroundings he shrank back from the kingdom and its King. Will you fix that man in your mind now as a type of the men who refuse to come into the kingdom of God because they are afraid of their surroundings, and just hold him in your memory while we range up beside him three other men.

One of them was a rich young ruler who came to Jesus one day as He was travelling along the highways of Palestine—a bright faced fellow with none of those blotches on his countenance that tell their story only too well of what is back of the countenance; with nothing back of the outside to show that it was an unclean or evil life. And when Jesus looked upon him, the clean, ruddy face telling of the clean, pure life, we are told that He loved him. And when the young man came up to Him and said to Him: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He answered him in a way to draw out his confidence, and told him what he must do: first of all, keep the commandments. He wanted to try the young man's character. "Well," said the young man, "perhaps I have kept them. I have not committed adultery; I have not stolen; I have not borne false witness; all these things I have kept from my youth. My mother taught me to be clean,

and I never have given up my birthright of purity and of cleanliness." "One thing," said Jesus, laying His finger on the real weak spot in that young man's life, "one thing thou lackest." He saw that the man was clean; that he had no gross vices clinging to him; that he had in a measure kept the outside of the commandments, whether he had kept the inside of them in Christ's way or not. What he still lacked was the spirit of generous abandon, of liberty, of unselfish service, the lack of which Christ laid His finger on as his great defect and sore. Once again the doors of the kingdom of God swung open before a man and the King of the kingdom stood on the threshold and invited him in, and the man shrank back because he had something he was unwilling to give up. Fix that man in your mind beside the lawyer as a type of the men who will not come into the kingdom of God because they have something in their lives that they are unwilling to give up.

I think of another man before whom a little Jew is standing, and he is speaking of the kingdom of God, and appealing to those deep moral instincts that never have been suppressed and never can be suppressed in any human heart, and as he pleads Agrippa wavers, and yet he passes it off with a supercilious smile, feeling too high to be offended, but too great and proud altogether to yield to Paul's appeal. "Paul," he says, sarcastically perhaps, "thou dost almost persuade me to be a Christian." There once again the kingdom of God opened its doors to a man, and a friend of the King stood with his hand on the door inviting a man to come in, and the man refused to come into the kingdom and to make the acquaintance of the King, because of that feeling of personal pride that to do this thing would be a little beneath him. He had a standing to maintain. He was a man of self-poise, of dignity. He had never given himself away. Do you suppose he was going to betray his own inner life and make a show of himself before his fellows by confessing himself a follower of the poor, despised Jesus? And he turned away from the gate of the kingdom of God. Let him stand in your mind side by side with these two other men as a type of the men who stay out of the kingdom because of personal pride.

And now range up beside these three one more. Once again that little Jew, a few weeks before this scene of which I have just been speaking, is arguing before a governor. He knows the character of that gov-

ernor. He reads on his face the story of his inner life, and he argues before him of righteousness, of self-control, and of a judgment to come; and while he reasons, Felix trembles. He is too weak a man to answer. He knows that what Paul is saying is true, and he stands there shifting to and fro, the poor, pliable, feeble, vacillating nature, afraid to come to a decision, and yet afraid not to do so. And he says: "Paul, Paul, go thy way; a little later I will think about it, and some day I will take the question up; when I have a little more convenient season I will call for thee." Let him stand for that great class of men who shuffle; who have not the moral power to take a clean step; the men who fail to go into the kingdom of God when its marble-white doors swing open before their hearts, because of a lack of downright, sterling, manly force.

Now, men, underneath these four lives—let them drop for just a moment—there runs this great truth: It is possible for a man to miss what God wants him to have. There were the gates of the kingdom of God wide ajar before those four men. Every one of those four men was free to go in, and they turned away from the open gates of the open kingdom, and never looked upon the face of the King in His beauty. Men think sometimes if they are lost it is God's fault, and not their fault. It is not so. God has done for the salvation of men everything He can do. He cannot break down the human personality. He cannot invade a man's own sovereignty. All He can do is just to say to us: "Come, My son, let us reason together." All He can do is just to plead with us and stand at the door and knock, and say: "If any man will open the door I will come in to him," but He cannot break through into the man's life. Why, what does human history teach but that? It is possible for men to miss the will of God for themselves. That is the whole great lesson of Jewish history. They wandered forty years through the wilderness, when it was only eight days' journey over into the promised land. God was getting them ready to recognize the Messiah when He came, and when "He came to His own, His own received Him not." The very first lesson of Jewish history is that it is possible for a race to miss what God wants it to have, and that is the whole lesson of human history. The King came to men, and He walked around about among men, and they saw the King's nature in Him, and they crucified Him like a thief, and between two thieves, on a cross. All human history went awry that bitter

day on Calvary, though the good God overruled it all.

My friends, we need only look into our own lives to see how easy it is to miss what God wants us to have. There are men here who have wrecked homes; who have had people in their own family lines die of broken hearts. I will warrant there isn't a family history represented here in this audience that does not bear the seams and the scars of sin. Just think back over your family history. Think of the drunkards in it. Just think, some of you, may be, upon the sin and the shame of your own homes. Did God intend us to have those things? It is possible for a man to miss what God wants him to have.

There was Jesus Christ standing with His outstretched arms before the gates of the kingdom, and there was that lawyer standing in the crowd. There had just come a little burst of manliness in him, and he separated himself a little bit from the throng, and he was standing there, I suppose, the first time for many years with that sense of isolation and freedom that belongs to the real man, and Jesus Christ was speaking to his heart, wanting just to throw his arms around that man and drag him into the kingdom. The man turned away and went back into the crowd again. And there the Saviour stood that day talking to that young man whom He loved; loved him because of what he was; loved him because of what he knew He could make him—and the young man turned away from what Christ wanted him to have.

It is possible for men to miss what God wants them to have, and men are missing it today in just the same way that those men missed it eighteen hundred years ago. There are thousands of men who are kept out of the kingdom of God because they are afraid of their crowds. There are some young men here who know well enough what they ought to do. They know that sin is a damnable thing; they know it is no part of a man's life to soil himself with lust and vice, and they are only tied fast to it because they are afraid to break with their crowd. There are thousands of men who are shut out of the kingdom of God today just because they are not men enough to shake themselves free and exercise their own will, independent of the sneer of some little set in which they move.

I heard the other day of a boy who went to a New England college, and he joined one of the fraternities there at the beginning of his freshman year, before he knew what

the character of the fraternity was; and he found out after a few days that he had got in with a lot of speckled men. He found it was harder to get out than to get in. Those men were not going to let him loose. And he stood it for a few weeks until he could not stand it any longer, and then he deliberately broke free and announced that he was going to leave the fraternity. They slandered him from the beginning to the end of his college course; they tried to blacken his character, and it was only because he had strength of personal will enough to stand up against it all that he emerged at last with a clean record and the respect of all men; because he had not been willing to knuckle under to a crowd.

There is a college at Aberdeen, Scotland, upon the stone walls of which it is said these words are cut, "They say. What do they say? Let them say." What difference does it make to me what other men say? Are they going to be my judges at the Judgment Day? I shall stand out all alone then, and the eyes of all the universe will be on me, and the Judge upon the throne will be speaking to me, and no crowd of men who drove me in slavery to their sins and vices here will be able then to stand up and take my punishment for me. By as much as I am to stand alone before the Great Throne on the Judgment Day, I propose to stand alone among men now.

What it is right for a man to do, it is right for a man to do, and no amount of sneering, no amount of sneering, no amount of poor, weak, frivolous criticism from his fellows can ever justify a man in being other than he ought to be. And yet, how many men there are here who will dodge some one going out; who will refuse the invitation to come into the kingdom of God to-day, just because they are afraid of the little crowd in which they move.

And there are men still who are shut out of the kingdom of God because they are unwilling to surrender. That vicious habit that you practice in secret—you know it would have to go if you came into the kingdom of God. That illicit relationship that you dare not speak about to your mother—you know it would have to go if you came into the kingdom of God. All that set of sins in men's lives that compels them to have secret places where they do not want their mothers' eyes, or God's eyes, to penetrate; all that class of sins that drag in their train corruption and corrosion of life, that make it impossible for a man to give what he gets on his wedding day—the man who

stands on the threshold of the kingdom of God knows he cannot carry those things with him.

"I beheld in my dream," says John Bunyan, "there was room for me, but there was not room for me and my sins." There are many men who stand on the threshold of the kingdom of God and they don't want to come in because they have got this or that thing in their lives that they don't want to give up—some dishonest practice in their business; some vicious habit; some foul spot in their lives. Maybe it is only a little thing; maybe it is a big thing; but there are men still who will sacrifice eternity for the sake of a passing lust. There are men still who will let all the endless years of God and the joy of abiding forever in the Father's house of many mansions slip away for the sake of some poor, paltry little thing that they cannot carry beyond the grave. Even still as Jesus Christ stands by the gate of His kingdom and calls men in, there are men who will not come because they will not surrender the things that cannot be taken in.

And I suppose that here in a company like this, there are some who are held out of the kingdom of God just as Agrippa was. They are respected men; men whom everybody trusts and confides in; men who never have betrayed themselves. "Why," they say, "people would hardly know what to make of it if I became a Christian. It would be a little demeaning in me now with my standing in the community just to bow down as any ordinary sinner and go into the kingdom of God." How strange it is that a man should think it humbling to become the son of God, when the Son of God did not think it humbling to become man. If God was willing to become a son of man for my sake, I am willing to become a son of God for His sake. Humiliating? I like to go back to my old home in Pennsylvania because I am my father's son. Is there any man here who does not feel a thrill of pride—maybe there are some—because they are their father's sons? Why? Because they themselves respect their fathers; because other men respect their fathers, and they are proud to acknowledge that they are their father's sons. "To as many as received Him," we read in the 1st chapter of the Gospel by John—"To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God"—the right to become the sons of God; the privilege to become the sons of God. Oh, friends, you cannot exaggerate the glory of it—of

being a son of God, and of having God acknowledge you as His son, and of having in your own heart the testimony, born of His Spirit, that you are the Son of God. And yet there are men who think that to have that in their lives would be humbling, and therefore as the King stands on the threshold of the kingdom of God and calls them in, they will not go.

And how many there are—every man of us knows them—who will not go into the kingdom of God just for a lack of sheer manly force. A man says to them: “Now, you know what you ought to be; you know what you ought to do. Come in and be what you ought to be and do what you ought to do,” and the man whimpers a little and he shifts back, and he says: “I—I intend to some day. I am not going to be a sheer fool. I know I ought some day to do this thing. There is only one thing for a man to do, and that is the right thing; there is only one thing for a man to be, and that is the right thing. I intend some day to do the right thing and be the right thing.” But the truth of the matter is that the man is not just a man. What makes a man? When the prodigal off there among the swine, filling his own belly with the husks that the swine did eat, came to himself at last; when he broke through all the shell of corruption and foul habit, and got into himself, how did the man express himself? “I will;” “I will;” “I will;” “I will arise and go to my father. I will say unto him: ‘Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight.’ I will ask him to make me as one of his hired servants.” And the poor outcast was a man again. When that moment comes in any life, tired of shuffling, tired of compromise, tired of drivelling imbecility, and the man gets up and says: “I will arise and go,” then the arms of Jesus Christ clasp him around and lift him up through the gates of the city of God.

My brothers, there are hundreds of men who are staying out of the kingdom of God in just such ways as these, and I say that for a man to stay out under any such pretext is a weak and a weakening thing. It is a weak thing. Stay out of the kingdom of God because you are unwilling to give up a little lust or sin! Stay out of the kingdom of God because you are afraid of what some man will say! Stay out of the kingdom of God because of the want of sheer force and strength in your life! A course of action like that is a weak course of action, and it ends in the excavation of a man’s character that leaves him where that poor

prodigal was before he came to himself and said: "I will get up out of this and go to my father." We deprecate in men any shuffling, vacillating weakness, in other men or in ourselves. We like in them and in ourselves that solid, robust rigidity of principle that makes the man say: "I know what the right thing for me to do and be is, and I propose to be the right thing and do the right thing, though a hell of devils assail me and try to drive me from my course."

I happened to be over night in Edinburgh a couple of years ago, just after the news of the battle of Magersfontein came to Scotland. You know that was a battle in South Africa, where some British general blundered and the Black Watch, one of the finest Scotch regiments, was cut to pieces, half of its men being left dead on the battlefield. Almost that whole regiment had been enlisted in Edinburgh. A friend of mine was telling me of passing down the street the day the tidings came. He said every shop in Edinburgh was closed, and there were little knots of men standing on the streets, and many of them had tears coursing down their cheeks. I happened to be staying with a gentleman who had a little boy. I asked the lad what he thought about the war. He said he hadn't thought much about it until that day the news came, but now it seemed very sad to him. He had a friend there, General Wauchope, who was killed at the head of his regiment, one of the best-known men in Edinburgh, and one of the best-beloved. He was one of the largest landholders in that section of Scotland. And when he and half his regiment were cut down in needless sacrifice, the whole city of Edinburgh wept like a little child. And yet, after all, there was a great feeling of contentment in it. They were sure that their regiment had died like a regiment of men. Almost every soldier in that regiment was a Christian. It was organized as a Presbyterian church, and the regimental officers presided at their regular regimental communion, and on their way to the front, going to the transports they went marching down the streets of Cork singing:

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
And to defend His cause,
Maintain the honor of His Word,
The glory of His cross."

And when a few weeks afterwards they came sailing into the harbor of Cape Town and disembarked, going at once up to the field of battle, they went ashore singing

that great soldier's song, the 'song that Hugh Beaver loved so:

"When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there."

It was only a few days afterwards that the roll was called up yonder for most of them, and they answered to their names. And one loves to think to-day of the Black Watch, the way it lived and the way it died, because it was made up of men who had their faith and were not ashamed to show it.

My brothers, you stand this evening on the threshold of the kingdom of God, and the King is here. Maybe your eyes see Him, and maybe they do not see Him. But I am speaking for Him, and inviting you into the kingdom. Will you come in to-night? How do you know you are going to have another chance to come in? Of course, you may. You are not going to die at once, probably, and there will be other opportunities, perhaps, when men will ask you to come and give your lives to Christ; to be the kind of men you know you ought to be; to do the sort of thing you know you ought to do. But how do you know, if you turn away from the kingdom this afternoon, that you will ever want to come in again? God won't change, but you will never be the same again that you are this afternoon. That lawyer came up to the gate of the kingdom, and Christ asked him to come in, and the door was open in front of him, and he felt a drawing down in his heart, just like the pulling of the fingers of a little child—you know what it is—drawing him in through the gates of the kingdom, and he turned away and never came back again. How can a man know, if he once refuses to accept Jesus Christ and to come in through the doors of the kingdom, that the next time his heart won't be a little harder, and he will want even less to come in?

In the life of the great naturalist, Charles Darwin, there is a story telling how once as he sat at his table he saw a little passion plant in front of him, and he took up a lead pencil and he laid on the lax tendrils. You know what the passion plant is, what it does. All the little leaves began to curl themselves around the lead pencil, and before they had quite grasped it, he drew the pencil out, and the leaves rolled back to their original position. And he laid the lead pencil down on them again, and they responded once more, only a little more slowly than the last time; and again, just before they had clutched the pencil, he drew it away, and the leaves a

little more slowly and patiently unfolded. And he did it a third time, and a fourth time, and a fifth time, and a sixth time, and each time those little tendrils responded, but each time more slowly than the last time. And the last time they stood absolutely unresponsive, and did not try to fold themselves around it at all. Oh, men, I beseech you not to trifle with your hearts. To-day, if you feel Jesus Christ lying on them, and the tendrils of your hearts are beginning to wrap around Him, don't slip away; let them clutch Him now, while it is time.

I have a dear friend who was an army chaplain, and he told me an old war story that happened within his own knowledge of a family down in Maine. There had been six boys, and five of them were shot in the war, and one of them, the only lad who was left, had enlisted, and he had been wounded on a Southern battlefield, and he was going home on a leave of absence. The surgeon told him he might never get home. He said he would like to try anyhow, and he got as far as New York, and he was pretty weak there. But he got across the city and took a train for Boston, and then for Maine. He got off at last at the railroad station that was nearest his father's house. It was snowing—just Christmas time—and he stood for a little time in the railroad station to rest, and then he made his way out through the storm down toward his father's home. He leaned up against the fence now and then to rest himself and regain his strength. And bye and bye he got on at last to the little gate that led up to his father's door. He saw the light from the great open fireplace, and he could see the shadows of his father and mother on the walls. He worked his way half way up the path to the door, and he felt his strength ebbing away. He got up near enough just to catch the sound of his old mother's voice by the fireside, and then he fell down dead on the very doorstep of his home. Oh, it is no illustration of the sinner and God. No one of us ever got to the threshold who didn't find the door swung wide ajar, and the Father's arms wrapped right around our hearts. But, friends, how do you know that if this evening you do not go in you will ever want to go in again? The harvest may be past, and the summer be ended. I beseech you to-day, "To-day harden not your hearts. Behold, now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation." Now, while the doors of the kingdom stand wide ajar, and the Son of the King stands in the open door inviting you in. Oh, friends, let

us get up as one man and go in, in to the King, into our Father's house. Will you not go in to-day? Shaking off the cowardice, the littleness, the sin, the pettiness, the paltriness of life, and, taking Jesus Christ by the hand, come home.





Jesus, Saving from Sins.

Rev. Chas. L. Mead.

MATT. i:21.

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

THE one great fact of this world is *Sin*.

It is stamped upon all human history and written on every individual life. Its baneful effects are evidenced throughout the world, and it remains for the religion which can give a sufficient remedy for sin to become the triumphant religion of the world. If we look for the evidences of sin, we find them

1. In Human Government. Among all the governments which have been constituted among men not one has been so builded as to ignore the fact of sin. Laws are enacted and penalties enjoined because of sin. The prison house and penitentiary are constant evidences of the fact that men sin. Our legislatures and law-makers acknowledge the fact that men sin and must be punished. If we turn to

2. The Religions of the World, we find there the acknowledgment of the fact of *sin*. Every religion which appeals to the human heart deals with sin, acknowledges its baneful presence and seeks a remedy. The consciousness of condemnation in the human heart demands a remedy of some kind, hence every religion must acknowledge and deal with the fact of sin.

If we turn

3. To Science, we find there the admission of the fact of sin. She recognizes a vitiating perverting influence in nature. There are storms in the air, quakings in the earth, tyranny of the weak by the strong, baffling obstacles in the stream of thought, all of which reveal the presence of dark, ob-

stinate and often unconquerable foes; so that the best men can do gives to them only approximate and never exacts results. Mental Philosophy admits the ignorance of the intellect, Moral Philosophy, the perplexity of the passions, while Natural Philosophy acknowledges the perverting influences of the visible world. Thus does Science confirm the fact that something is amiss in this world and that she herself is seeking to set it right.

If we turn to

4. The Word of God, we find that Scripture not only admits, but declares the fact of *sin*. Three hundred and seven times the word *sin* describes man's condition of alienation from God. "Behold," said the Prophet, "your sins have separated you from your God."

Paul declares that all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Sin, then, is the cause of man's separation from His maker and his failure, and is universal in its sweep, overwhelming the race.

If we turn to the story of the Fall in Genesis we find that whatever construction we may put upon it figuratively that it is correct philosophically.

The first fact we meet with after the Fall is the fact of *conscience*.

When God came to Adam in the Garden, in the cool of the day, we read that Adam hid himself, and in answer to God's question "Where art thou?" said: "I was afraid and I went and hid myself."

That is the cry of every convicted sinner and fugitive from justice to this hour, everywhere on earth. The Conscience Fund in the Police Department of our cities, reveals that men are conscious of their sin, and seek relief through separation.

The second fact in the story is man's consciousness that his was a destiny of toil and labor.

Here begins the wasting, wearing existence, the presence of the thorn and thistle, the sweat of the brow, the physical agony in human life, which through sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

The third fact in confirmation of the story in Genesis is found in the curse pronounced upon Motherhood.

For Motherhood is the sacred tragedy of life, its holiest experience, the perpetual renewal of heaven coming to earth in the little face of the loving child.

Accepting the Biblical idea of the word *sin* in the original, i. e., the coming short of the mark, we find its evidences also

5. In Individual Experience. We have

sinned, that is, we have come short of the mark. Look at your individual life as a citizen! Have you not, some time, come short in your duty to your country? or as a father in your duty to your family! or as a created child of God in your duty to Him?

The indictment becomes terribly and severely true that all have sinned and come short of the mark, attaining approximate and never exact results.

So does sin become to us the one stern damning fact of this world, universal in its sweep and overwhelming in its power. Having thus established the fact of sin, let us look for a remedy from its terrible power.

How can man get rid of sin? A divine law must be satisfied, for "sin is a transgression of the law." Atonement must be made, for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." Forgiveness must be granted, and sin can then be as if it had never been. "Let the wicked forsake his way and return unto our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Men seek to get rid of sin.

i. Through the worship of Nature man says, "Nature is my God; I will seek relief from my sin through Nature."

So Adam sought to cover his nakedness by making an apron of fig-leaves, but God said to him, "You cannot cover sin that way," and He made a coat of skin and clothed him.

Adam took leaves from an unfeeling tree. God took the life of an animal to cover the naked man. "Sin cannot be atoned for by any mechanical action. Suffering and atonement must always follow. From the beginning to the end the track of the sinner is marked with blood."

Nature makes no atonement for sin, nor does she ever forgive the sinner.

Men seek relief from the condemnation of sin through morality. They trust in morality as a sufficient remedy.

The rich young man who came to Christ believed that morality should be sufficient, yet revealed in his question the fact of its failure to save from sin.

For morality cannot relieve man of his past; it can form his future, but cannot forgive his past. So the rich young man went away into darkness, sorrowfully, with the fatal shortcomings of his past, for morality never forgives.

Men look also to Conscience as a sufficient guide to lead them away from their sin. They say, "If I live up to the light of my Conscience, I will be

safe. But Conscience never satisfies a broken law nor offers atonement for man. Conscience recalls in vivid fearful outline the sins of the past, but Conscience never forgives; and when man has found that all his plans and schemes are futile, he turns at last to see how God deals with sin.

The text declares that Jesus came to save His people from their sins, and suggests to us that Christ was born into this world with a specific relationship to sin.

If we look to God for relief from our sin, we find that coincident with the Fall, God gave man hope and sounded the voice of promise, keeping the race from despair and desolation.

Down the centuries as they ceaselessly pass the divine purpose runs, and the divine promise gleams when God declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. A redeemer should come, who could satisfy a divine law, make atonement for sin, man could be forgiven his iniquity and his transgressions remembered no more. We must not forget that when man sinned Satan was enthroned as the god of this world; that the battle for the mastery of man began; that Satan, acquainted with the divine purpose, would defeat God's plan if possible, and would, by the very attribute of God's justice, hold God to the strict conditions of the promise; for God could not be unjust even to the Devil.

And God respected the conditions of the promise made in His dealings with Satan and sin. One of these conditions was

1. That the Redeemer must be born under the full force of the broken law, and be obedient to the divine command.

He must be tempted as Adam was, but He must stand where Adam fell. He must have an ancestry which had been so sinful as to have broken at some time, somehow and somewhere the entire law of God. Hence, it is possible from the genealogy in Matthew to discover that all of the Ten Commandments were broken by the ancestry of the Redeemer, bringing Him under the force of the broken law. So when the human race had utterly failed and had broken the law, "in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, *made under the law*, to redeem them that were under the law that we might become the sons of God." God met perfectly this condition of His promise.

Another condition was this:

2. That the Redeemer of the race must be born of woman. It was the seed of the woman, not the man, which, according to

the promise, was to bruise the serpent's head.

Christ must have an earthly mother. Both Matthew and Luke record how perfectly God met this condition. We repeat in the Apostles' Creed that Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and Christ, as the only begotten Son of God, was *made of a woman*, as well as made under the law, that we might be redeemed from our sin through the sacrifice of Himself.

Still another condition which must be met was this:

3. That He must represent all classes of the human race, the highest as well as the lowest, the poor as well as the rich. His life must have blended in it toil, labor, fatigue, disappointment, pain and death. He must be made perfect through suffering that He might bring many sons unto glory. He must die for the sins of the people that the divine law could be upheld and the sinner forgiven. So when I study His companions around His cradle, and there see the extremes of society worshipping the young child; when I look at His cross and see there the nations of the earth acknowledging His Kingship, I feel that in His life and death He has met perfectly the conditions which sin created and made possible man's forgiveness with God.

Thus it is that God removes sin by giving His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for sin and forgiving the sinner. Thus Jesus saves His people from their sins by the sacrifice of Himself; for "He died the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God."

In a little town in the northern part of Germany there lived a widow with a large family. Hunger and privation pressed harder and harder upon the widow's purse until the eldest daughter, an accomplished musician, felt that she must aid her mother in bearing the heavy burden of family support. She conceived the idea of giving a musicale in a distant city where her friends resided.

She drew up her "Prospectus," and in a fateful moment of temptation placed upon the announcement a lie, stating that she was the pupil of Abbe Liszt.

She was not nor had she ever been a pupil of the great master. The day arrived for the recital. She went to the city, sought out the best hotel, and there on the register above her name was the name of the master himself. There on the bulletin was her "prospectus" with its horrible lie. Con-

science-stricken, she resolved that she would go to the master, tell him of her wearied mother and the hungry children in her little home, confess her sin, then as quietly as possible leave the city and go back to her home hopeless and despairing.

She sought his room, timidly knocked on the door, and when his kindly voice answered "Come in," she threw herself at his feet, sobbed out her pitiful story, and asked his forgiveness. He gently lifted her up and said: "I have been composing a new piece to-day and would like to hear how it sounds. Will you come and play it for me?" She sat down at the piano, and when she touched the keys the master saw that his successor had come. He made a suggestion here, a little correction there, and then said: "Now, my dear child, I have given you your first lesson and you are my pupil now; so go down and place upon the bulletin that the master is in town and will play the last number on the program, for you are freely forgiven."

So when I came to the Master a guilty sinner and fell prostrate at His feet, He lifted me up, forgave my sin, made it as if it had never been, and remembers it no more.

And when I see Jesus standing and reaching out with pitying hands toward a repentant sinner, and saying, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." When I see His tenderness toward a sinful woman and hear Him say, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee! Go and sin no more," I feel that He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

With a confidence that is absolute and a conviction that is unwavering, I point you to Jesus Christ as the Saviour from sin.

He will take thy guilty soul, and, with the crimson tide which streams from His own heart, will roll back the tide of sin, sweeping thee on to ruin and death and pour in the tides of life and immortality. And when death shall smite thy mortal frame, standing beside thy trembling soul, holding in His hand thy feeble fingers, He will stoop down and whisper to thy fainting heart, "Because I live ye shall live also," and will guide thee to a blessed immortality.





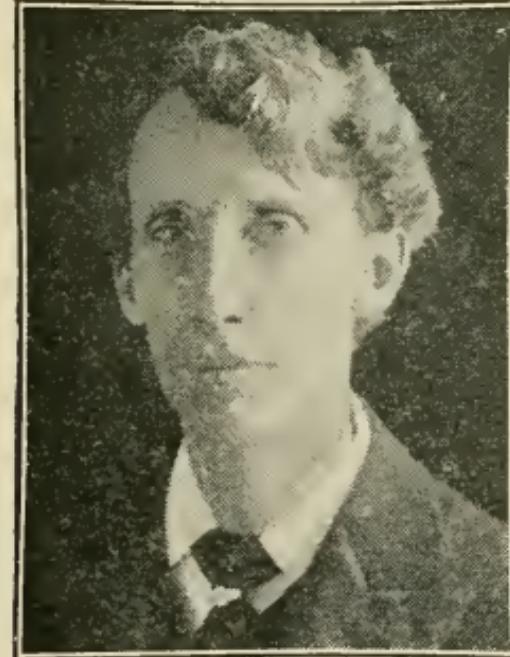
The Desert and the Garden.

Rev. G. Campbell Morgan,
London, England.

ISAIAH 1v:7.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

BY a coincidence of arrangement this is the central verse of the chapter. I put it that way because the chapters and verses are usually a hindrance to reading the Scriptures. There are six verses before this one, and six following it, and it is the dividing line between descriptions of two conditions of



life—the description of one condition in the first six verses, and that of another in the second six.

In the first part of the chapter you have a picture of a man away from God. In the last half you have a picture of a man in fellowship with God; and if you ask me how a man can go from the first half into

the second half, the answer is that he must go through the seventh verse, and no man passes from the first into the second except through that gateway.

Let us refresh our memories. If we glance at the first part we find such expressions as these: "Everyone that thirsteth;" "he that hath no money;" "ye spend money" (not contradictory of the last one as I will show later) for that which is not bread: "your labor;" "satisfieth not." Those expressions describe a condition which we shall do well to look at. Thirsty—without money—spending money for what is not bread—hard at work—never satisfied.

Jumping to the other end of the chapter we can see the counterpart points of that half: "go out with joy;" "led forth with peace;" "the mountains shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands;" "instead of the thorn, the fir tree;" "instead of the brier, the myrtle tree."

It needs no argument to show that a direct contrast is presented by the two ends of the chapter. At one end is set forth drudgery and degradation—at the other, joy and peace, singing and clapping of hands. In the first half are thirst, hunger, hard work, no rest; in the second, joy, peace and gladness.

Now, what are these conditions? Who is speaking? The speaker is God's prophet and he is addressing God's own people. It is not a warning by the prophet to an outside nation, and this is perhaps a startling fact. Many people consider this text as a Gospel message to the unsaved, and so it is; but it is a double-edged sword, and is meant for saints as well as sinners. In any case its first call is to the man who has gone away from God.

It was probably uttered to the Jews while captive in Babylon. They had inherited a spiritual birthright from their fathers. They had been brought up in an atmosphere of knowledge of the law of God, but for their own sins had been sold into captivity.

This is the Scripture picture of their condition. They had gone away down and had become tainted with the commercial spirit of Babylon. The prophet says to them, You are a thirsty people whose thirst can't be quenched, and the money you are making cannot buy you any water that will quench it. Your spirits long for the land of rocks and mountains and trees and hills; in fact, your souls cry out after God. You buy bread that does not strengthen you,

you are always at work, and you are never satisfied.

That is a perfectly correct picture of human life apart from God. A Godless life is a dissatisfied life, is a thirsty life; and you may make all the money you like but it will never buy the living water. A man without God is always thirsty and hungry, he spends his money for what is not bread, and he has no rest.

All the unrest of the world at this moment—political, social and individual—is due to one fact and one only—that man has got away from God. If you could bring the whole race back to the heart of God and to His love and to His law all the problems that now vex humanity would be immediately solved. All woe, misery and suffering would cease if men could be got back to God.

The Godless man is never satisfied. He never says "I have enough." He devotes himself to attempting to feed immortality with mortality; that part of his nature which belongs to eternity with the fleeting things of time; the subtle intangible soul with the material dust and ashes of the world which pass away even while he tries to hold them. Thank God for the feverish unrest that possesses the soul of the Godless man!

The prophet tries to woo his people back to God by showing them a very strong contrast. He says to them: You are in Babylon there—on that flat, dry waste where you have no mountains or hills. (The New Englander or anyone else who has been raised in a hilly or mountainous country feels pretty lonesome if he finds himself out on the prairies.) You belong to a land of hills and trees and rivers, but you are down there on the flat dead level of Babylon. True, you are in a great city, but what are cities compared with mountains and trees and hills? You are making money, but that buys nothing but dust.

You see the spiritual value of the passage? The nation had lost its sense of God everywhere; it had lost communion with God; had lost everything, indeed, worth having. He wants to say to them: "When you get back from the Desert of Babylon to the Garden of God, you will get back to Nature as well as to Nature's God."

I wonder how long it is since some of you business men heard a mountain sing. That is worth thinking about. How long since you heard the trees clap their hands? You say, it's a long time. When I was a lad I used to think when the breeze moved in the trees that they clapped their hands,

but that is many years ago! I should be very glad to push you back again if I could, to make you backslide into your boyhood again. Did not the Master Himself say, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in nowise enter into the Kingdom of God?"

How is it you have not heard the mountains sing? Because you have been money-grubbing in this Babylon. You have been trying to feed your immortal soul with the bread that perishes. You can't do it.

When a man gets back to God he'll hear the mountains sing; and I am now on the dead level of fact; not speaking in a figure at all. You have lost Nature because you have lost God.

No man ever found God in Nature—not the God that demands worship. He may find the God who demands his fear, or reverence, but not the God who draws his heart out. When you find God in Christ, in the heart-beat of the Son of Man, then you find Him.

When you get back through the gate that opens into everything worth having in life you will get the flowers, and God in the flowers; the mountain, and God on the mountain; the sea, and Him who said to the mighty ocean, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther!"

The spiritual value and the spiritual verity of this chapter is based on that thought. Man finds his peace and joy when he finds God. When he gets back to God he is at the place of rest, the place of the living bread and the living water which will satisfy all his needs.

Thirsty ones of Babylon, there is living water in the Garden of God! Hungry ones of Babylon, the Bread of Heaven is in the Garden of God! You who have no satisfaction in Babylon, your heart can find rest in the Garden of God!

You who have no music in Babylon can have all the music of the Garden of God!

Where are *you* living? We are all living either in Babylon or in the Garden of God.

Where are *you* living? Are you living in the Desert or in the Garden of songs and of living water? Is your heart at rest or is it troubled? Are you thirsty or has your thirst been quenched? Are you hungry or have you been fed? Are you in the Desert or in the Garden? That is the question.

You say you are not quite sure. Then you are certainly in the Desert; for every man in the Garden of God is dead positive about it. The Church of God is crowded up with people who are not sure. Some "be-

lieve" they have crossed into the Garden; but when a man is living with God, do you think he does not know it for a certainty?

This congregation can be divided into those who are in the Desert and those who are in the Garden of God. I want to talk to the people of the Desert.

If you spoke the truth you would say: I am not at rest; my sins, my passions, my evil forces are against me. Do you want to be right? Are you asking: How can I get out of the Desert?

Hear your answer: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God and He will abundantly pardon."

This text has two parts to it. The first half shows the conditions that man has to fulfil, and the second half gives the promises that God will fulfil.

What is man's part? "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord."

That is your business. Nothing else.

What is God's half? "He will have mercy upon him * * * our God * * * will abundantly pardon." Get that clear.

Let us, for the moment, put the second half on one side. Let us say, as a messenger of Christ, that if at any moment any person here will fulfil the conditions, God will fulfil His promise without delay. God never waits any longer than man keeps Him waiting. God is waiting now to be merciful. Let no man make the mistake of waiting for God to forgive him. Obey the command, and quicker than any lightning flash shall mercy come. When there is delay it is with us and not with my Master. And that leads me to the heart of the message.

What am I to do that God may fulfil His promise? "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord."

How many things are you to do? Three? Yes, and no. There are three things named, but they are different statements of one thing only.

What is that one thing? "Returning unto the Lord," the prophet said, but he led up to it by showing the way.

1. Let the wicked forsake his way (putting the emphasis on the last word):

2. Forsake his thoughts:

3. Return to the Lord.

Now the prophet began with the external facts of life. The Hebrew word for "way" means a beaten track, a roadway. You

must forsake the way you are traveling in, and go another way.

How can the wicked forsake his way? There is only one way to do it—by forsaking his thoughts.

I want to say a word about "thoughts." You say, "I can't help my thoughts." You are not told to forsake thoughts. The Hebrew word conveys the idea of weaving—something that has a warp and woof—a plan, a conception. If they are possessed of their reason, men never do anything without thinking first about achieving certain results: they make their outward experience out of their inward ideas.

There is no one here that has not, consciously or unconsciously, deep down in his thoughts some conception of life, and every one of you is living his or her life on the basis of that conception as to what life is.

One man's conception is that life gives him the chance to enjoy himself; another, that it is his opportunity to make a great name for himself, and so on.

Now that "thought" that underlies all your life is what you have to give up. What you have to give up is the heart's false idea, the internal blasphemy. You have to give up your conception of life—your thought—and take God's. Your way of living is not His, and your thoughts not His thoughts.

If you read your Bible carefully you will see the reason: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." The period there in the King James version has made people think that a new subject is then begun, but the fact is that the the *reason* immediately follows—"for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

The reason why you are to abandon your thoughts and take God's is because His way for you is as high as Heaven, and you have been trying to satisfy your soul down on the earth. God's thought for you includes the eternals, while your thought for yourself is bounded by the dust of to-day. His thought reaches up to eternal life for you; your thought is all on the earth and bounded by earthly conditions. You are trying to degrade your soul to the level of the earth, while He wants to lift it to the level of Heaven.

You say: "That is a stern Gospel?" If it is, it has the sternness of love, and don't you know that there is no sternness like the sternness of love?

I once saw a mother become a veritable

fury on account of her love for her child. It was during my first charge.

There was a level railroad crossing in the town. One day a sweet little child, about seven years old, dimple-fisted and golden-haired, strayed on to the track at this crossing. An express train running to London at the rate of sixty miles an hour was approaching. The mother saw the child's peril. She rushed to her rescue, seized hold of her as she had never seized her before, and almost hurled the child off the track. The child was frightened at the mother's rough grasp and screamed with terror; but it was love that drove the mother up to the apparent cruelty in her determination to save the child's life.

God's love is sincere. I bring you news beaming with sincerity. You must quit your way, your thought, and get back to God, even if you are crucified in the process. Only that way will take you out of the Desert and into the Garden.

Some one says, "Suppose I do that—that I deliberately give up my thought for His thought, my way for His way, and go back to Him, how am I to know? What will He do when I come?"

"He will have mercy; He will abundantly pardon."

"Is there anything else?"

"Nothing else."

"Do you mean to say that this can happen this moment? I didn't come in here intending to go into any such a serious matter as this. I only turned in with the rest of the people. If, sitting here, I turn back to Him, as you say, will He pardon me without any period of probation?"

"He will."

"I can't believe it."

Why not? Are you saying in your heart what a man once said to me? He was a Yorkshire collier—a hard-headed, intelligent specimen of humanity. As I spoke to him in an after-meeting, he said, "I can't believe that Gospel."

I asked, "Why not?"

It is too cheap!

I could not help feeling some admiration for the man's thinking deep enough into the subject to say that: still he was wrong.

"Do you say that if I return to the Lord He will forgive all my sins and blot out the whole thing?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Excuse me for saying it in my own way, but that is too easy."

I said to him, "Have you been to work to-day?"

A little startled, he said, "Yes, certainly."

"Were you down in the pit to-day?"

"Yes."

"How did you get home?"

"I walked home; what do you mean?"

"How did you get out of the pit and on to the road? You were down some five hundred yards under ground; how did you get up?"

"As I always do; up the shaft in the cage."

"How much did you pay?"

"Nothing" (with an astonished look).

"How did you trust yourself in the cage to come up the shaft? It was so cheap."

"I did not pay anything, but it cost the company a great deal of money to sink the shaft and put the machinery in place for the working of the cage."

"Did you ever think what it cost God to write that verse in *Isaiah* for you, 'He will have mercy'?"

It is not cheap. Do you know the cost set forth in that verse—"for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" I can't fathom that—I cannot tell what it means; but that is what it cost God to give you mercy. You want to get into the Garden, go through the wicket gate. Turn back from your sins, your thought, your self-centered life, and put your hand on the wicket.

"It is too easy?" That gate is hinged to the Cross of Calvary, and you will never know what it did cost till you have fathomed the depth of the agony of the Son of His love. He *will* have mercy. In the cost was included the forsaking of the Son of His love, and in this way only could He be just, and the justifier of him who believeth.

Some one says: "I am not interested in this thing at all."

I have no other message for you. I can only pray for you. If you are content with the dust and will live in the dust, I have no other word for you.

But some one else says: "I am interested, but I cannot quit my way." Then you can't get into the Garden of God. I have no authority to tell you of any other way. But I say that God, knowing all your past history, all the inwardness of your depravity and all the evil of your nature, loves you, and if you will turn from your way He will have mercy.

He is waiting now to "abundantly pardon," but He cannot do it till you return to

Him. He waits for the wicked to forsake his way, for the return of the sinner to himself; and then—and not till then—will He save. If you love your sin and refuse to give it up, I have no warrant to offer you a pardon.

Yet another says: "I am interested. I am tired and sick of sin. I am in dead earnest about the matter, and am ready to leave my way, but it is difficult for me to believe."

Don't tell me that it is difficult to believe. Tell God. Say to Him, Oh, God, I can't believe what Thou dost say! I never met a man yet who could do that. I always find that when you can get a man away from talking to man to talk to God, he cannot say very much about unbelief.

Don't say that you will try to believe. In Chicago, during some meetings, I had a certain Bible that my mother gave me when I was twenty-one. In dealing with a young man he made a remark of that kind to me. I said, "You see this Bible; my mother gave it to me on my twenty-first birthday; why don't you say you will try and believe me when I say that?"

"I would not be so rude, sir. I *do* believe you."

"Then would you be more rude to God than you would be to me? If not, then go and tell Him you believe Him."

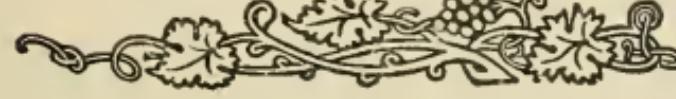
If you are going to take Him at His word now say to God, "I forsake my way, I abandon my thoughts, I turn to Thee!"

Then He does have mercy: He does abundantly pardon, and you can sing:

Oh, happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God:
Well may this glowing heart rejoice
And tell its rapture all abroad.

'Tis done! the great transaction's done!
I am my Lord's and He is mine!
He drew me and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine!

That's faith!
Let us pray!







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EVANGELIST.

Rev. S. Hartwell Pratt,

Superintendent of Tent Evangel.

M R. PRATT inaugurated Tent work in the City of Taunton, Mass., June 3d, 1879, afterwards holding meetings at Holyoke and Westfield. The next year he held Tent services in Westerly, R. I., and Saratoga Springs. In 1881 the Tent was pitched in New York City, on Second Avenue, corner of Twentieth Street, and for three seasons services were held—1881, 1882 and 1883—and at the corner of Broadway and Fifty-fifth Street in 1884. In 1885 a long series of meetings was held in Pittsfield, Mass. Mr. D. L. Moody became so interested in the reports of the Tent work that at the close of the Pittsfield meetings he invited Mr. Pratt to come with his Tent to Northfield during the August Conference. The Tent was pitched on the Seminary grounds, and was used as an "Object Lesson." Addresses were made from the platform, and Mr. Moody inquired very carefully into the methods and results of the work. The next year Mr. Moody opened a number of Tents in Chicago. During the years 1899 and 1900 the Tent was pitched at Broadway and Fifty-sixth Street. The series of meetings each season continuing sixteen weeks. This year, 1902, the Tent was opened May 25th, and meetings were held for twenty weeks.

"**Mr. Pratt's Tent Meetings in New York inspired Mr. John Converse of Philadelphia to inaugurate Tent meetings in that city.**"—Rev. J. F. Carson, D. D., Pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y.





